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FRÄULEIN ELSE

ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

FRÄULEIN ELSE

A NOVEL

Translated from the German by
ROBERT A. SIMON

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TRANSLATOR'S NOTE

The word "Filou," which occurs frequently in this novel, is, originally, French argot, and cannot be translated literally. It has been carried into German, and it may mean anything from "flirt" to "roué," depending on the inflection of the voice. When the first syllable is accented, as in French, the word carries a playful implication; when the second is stressed, as in German, the expression is one of contempt. "Filou," as employed by Fräulein Else, may be approximated by the slang terms of "sheik" and "slicker," but as the word has no English equivalent, no attempt has been made to supply one.

Similarly, a few colloquialisms, such as "gnädige Frau," and the greeting "Küss die Hand" are also retained in the original.

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"*SO you really don't want to play any more, Else?*" — "No, Paul, I really can't play any more. Adieu. — Auf Wiedersehen, gnädige Frau." — "*Oh, Else, why don't you call me Frau Cissy—or better yet, just plain Cissy?*" — "Auf Wiedersehen, Frau Cissy" — "*But tell me, why are you going already? Dinner won't be ready for at least two hours.*" — "Please go ahead, Frau Cissy, and finish at singles with Paul. Really, it's no fun playing with me today." — "*Leave her alone, dear lady. She's in one of her moods today. — As a matter of fact, Else, being moody is most becoming to you. — And as for the red sweater you're wearing—that's even more so.*" — "Well,

Paul, I do hope you'll find me sweeter tempered in blue. Adieu."

That was rather a good exit. Here's hoping Paul and Cissy don't think me jealous. — I'll swear there's something between the two, but nothing in the world worries me less. — I think I'll turn around again and wave to them. Wave to them and smile. Now, don't I look gracious? — Oh, Heavens, they're playing again. As a matter of fact, I play a much better game than Cissy; and Paul really isn't exactly a champion. — But he *is* handsome with his open collar and that naughty look. If only he weren't so affected. Don't worry, Aunt Emma, so far as I am concerned. . . .

What a perfectly wonderful evening! This should have been the right sort of weather for a trip to the Rosetta Camp. How gorgeously the Cimone towers up into the sky! — We should have started at five o'clock in the morning. Of course, I would have felt miserable, as usual, when

we began—but that feeling soon wears off. — There's nothing more divine than wandering through the gray of the morning. — That one-eyed American at the Rosetta looked like a prize-fighter. Perhaps someone knocked his eye out in a fight. I'd rather like to be married in America, but not to an American; or perhaps it would be pleasant to marry an American, and then live in Europe. A villa on the Riviera with marble steps going into the sea. — How long is it since we were in Mentone? It must be seven or eight years. I was thirteen or fourteen at the time. Ah, yes, those were the days when we were in better circumstances. — It really was silly to postpone the outing. We'd have been back by now. — At four o'clock, as I was going out to play tennis, the special delivery letter about which Mother telegraphed hadn't arrived. Perhaps it's here now. I might just as well have played another set. — Why are those two young people greeting me? I don't

know them. They've been living here at the hotel since yesterday and have been taking their meals at the left side in the dining room, where the Dutchmen used to sit. Did I nod back ungraciously or haughtily? I didn't mean to act that way. What did Fred call me on the way home from "Coriolanus"? High-spirited. No, disdainful. You're disdainful, not high-spirited, Else. — Those are nice words. He's always finding nice words. — Why am I walking so slowly? Can it be that I'm afraid of the news in Mother's letter? Well, I can't expect anything very pleasant. Why a special delivery letter? Perhaps she wants me home again. Ah me, what a life—in spite of the silk stockings and the silk sweater. I have three pair—I, the poor relative, invited out by her rich aunt. I'm sure she's already sorry she invited me. Dear Auntie, shall I put it in writing for you that I don't love Paul—even in my dreams? Oh, Lord, I don't dream about anybody. I'm not in love and I

never have been. I wasn't even in love with Albert, though I may have imagined so for days and days. I think that I just can't fall in love with anyone. That's really remarkable, for I'm certainly a sensualist. But still, I'm proud and haughty. Thank Heaven for that! The first time I really was in love was when I was thirteen. I was in love with Van Dyck and still more in love with the Abbé des Grieux and also with Renard. And at the Wörthersee when I was sixteen years old. — Well, no, that really wasn't anything. Oh, why am I reminiscing about all these things? I'm not writing my memoirs. I don't even keep a diary like Bertha. Fred rather attracts me—nothing more. Perhaps, if he had a little more swank. There; I have it. I'm a snob. Father knows it and always laughs at me. Oh, dear Father, you worry me a great deal. I wonder whether he has ever deceived Mother. *Has* he? Of course, he has. Often. Mother's rather stupid. She

really knows nothing about me at all. Neither do other people. As for Fred—well, yes, but only very slightly. — Perfectly heavenly evening. The hotel's all gayly bedecked. One gets the impression of many prosperous care-free people. Me, for instance. Ha ha. It's too bad, because I really was born for a care-free life. It might have been so wonderful. It's a pity. — Now there's a red glow over the Cimone. Paul might look at it and call it an Alpine glow. As a matter of fact, that's far from an Alpine glow. It's beautiful enough to make you weep. Oh, why does one ever have to return to the city!

"*Good evening, Fräulein Else.*" — "Küss' die Hand, gnädige Frau." — "*Back from tennis?*" — She can see I'm back from tennis. Why does she ask me? "Yes, indeed, we played almost three hours. Are you taking a walk?" — "*Yes, the usual evening constitutional down the lane. There's such a beautiful path between the two meadows, but during the*

daytime it's almost too sunny." — "Yes, the meadows here are gorgeous, especially so from my window by moonlight." —

"*Good evening, Fräulein Else.*" — "*Küss' die Hand, gnädige Frau.*" — "Good evening, Herr von Dorsday." — "*Back from tennis, Fräulein Else?*" — "How observant you are, Herr von Dorsday." — "*Please don't make fun of me, Else.*" — Why doesn't he call me "Fräulein Else"? — "*Anyone who looks so beautiful with a tennis racket is justified in carrying it for decorative purposes.*" — The ass! I just won't answer that at all. — "We were playing all afternoon. There were only three of us, Paul, Frau Mohr and myself." — "*I was a ranking tennis player in my day.*" — "And aren't you any longer?" — "*No, I'm too old for that now.*" — "Old? Why, in Marienlyst there was a Swede who was sixty-five years old. He played every evening from six to eight, and the year before that he played through a whole tournament." — "*Well, I'm*

neither sixty-five as yet, thank Heaven, nor, unfortunately, a Swede." — Why unfortunately? I suppose he thinks that's funny. The best thing for me to do is to laugh politely and just leave. "Küss' die Hand, gnädige Frau. Adieu, Herr von Dorsday." What a deep bow he makes and what calves' eyes! I wonder whether I insulted him by referring to the sixty-five-year-old Swede. That doesn't matter. Frau Winawer must lead an unhappy life. She's fifty, at least. Those tear sacs of hers—as though she had wept a great deal in her day. How terrible it must be to be so old! Dorsday is walking over toward her. There he is walking along at her side. He still looks rather well with his grayish Van Dyke beard. But I can't feel at all attracted to him. He's only a social climber. What good does your first-class tailor do you, Herr von Dorsday? — Dorsday, rather. I'm sure your name used to be something else. — Here comes that sweet young girl

of Cissy's with her Fräulein. — "God bless you, Fritzi. Bon soir, mademoiselle. Vous allez bien?" — *"Merci, Mademoiselle. Et vous?"* — "Well, Fritzi, I see you're carrying an Alpine stick. Are you going to climb to the top of the Cimone?" — *"No, I'm not allowed to climb as high as that."* — "Perhaps you'll be allowed to next year. Good-bye, Fritzi. A bientôt, Mademoiselle."— *"Bon soir, Mademoiselle."*

A most attractive person. I wonder why she ever became a nurse girl—and why did she ever work for Cissy? It must be a mean life. Oh, Heavens, just to think that the same thing might happen to me! But of course it wouldn't, for I'm very accomplished. — Accomplished? — What a priceless evening! "The air is like champagne." That's what Dr. Waldberg said yesterday. And the day before yesterday somebody else said it. — I wonder why people will stay indoors in wonderful weather like this. I just can't understand

it. Or is everyone waiting for a special delivery letter? The porter has just seen me. If there had been a special delivery letter he would have brought it to me immediately. Well, thank God, there's none there. I'll lie down a while before dinner. Why does Cissy say "dîner"? That's a stupid affectation. They're just like one another, Cissy and Paul. — Oh, I wish the letter were here already. It'll probably show up at "dîner," and if it doesn't show up then I'll have a restless night. I slept so miserably last night. I'll take my veronal today. But I'll get used to that. No, my dear Fred, you mustn't worry about me. In my thoughts I'm always with you. — One ought to try everything, even hashish. I think that Ensign Brandel brought some with him from China. Is hashish drunk or smoked? It's supposed to give you marvelous visions. Brandel invited me to drink—or smoke—hashish with him. — Rather impertinent on his part—but he *is* handsome.

"Please, a letter for you, Fräulein." — So it's the porter. — I'm turning toward him quite casually. Perhaps it's only a letter from Caroline, or from Bertha, or Fred or Miss Jackson. "Many thanks." It's a special delivery letter from Mother. Why didn't he tell me immediately that it was a special delivery letter? "I see it's a special delivery letter." I shan't open it until I get to my room and then I'll read it all by myself. — There goes the Marchesa. Doesn't the dusk make her look young! I'm sure she's forty-five. I wonder where I'll be at forty-five. Possibly dead. — I hope so. She's smiling at me just as pleasantly as always. I'll pass by, nodding a little, and show her that the smile of a Marchesa doesn't make too much of an impression on me. — *"Buona sera."* — She bids me buona sera. Well, now I really must bow slightly. I wonder whether I bowed too deeply. She really is ever so much older. What a wonderful walk she has! I wonder if she's divorced. My

walk is beautiful, too, but—I'm aware of it. That's the difference. — An Italian might be dangerous for me. It's a pity that the good-looking dark one with the Roman head left so soon. Paul said he looked like a Filou. My goodness, I've nothing against Filous! In fact, quite the opposite. — So, here I am at Number Seventy-seven. Seventy-seven really is a lucky number. Beautiful room. The pine wood is lovely. — Now we have a real Alpine glow. Even so, I shan't admit it to Paul. Paul's really rather shy. He's a doctor and a woman's specialist as well. Perhaps he's shy for that very reason. The day before yesterday when we were walking in the forest we were so far away from everyone that he might have been a bit more forward, only it would have done him no good. As for being forward, no one ever has tried it with me. Oh, possibly when we were swimming three years ago in the Wörthersee. But, *forward:* no, he was just plain indecent—handsome as he was.

He was a real Apollo Belvedere, though I didn't realize it at the time. But still I was only sixteen. There's my heavenly meadow. My—! Oh, I wish I could carry you back with me to Vienna. What beautiful mist! Is it really autumn? Of course it is. Today's the third of September and we are high up in the mountains.

Well now, Fräulein Else, will you finally make up your mind to read that letter? It doesn't necessarily concern Father. Couldn't it possibly contain some news about my brother? Perhaps he's engaged to one of his old flames. Perhaps to a chorus girl or a shop girl. Oh, no, he'd be too clever to do that. I really know nothing about him at all. When I was sixteen and he twenty-one he confided a great many of his affairs to me, especially as they concerned a certain Lotte; but all of a sudden he stopped. Lotte must have done something to him. And since then he's confided no more. — Well, here I've opened the letter without even noticing it. I'll sit

down on the window sill and read it. I must take care that I don't fall out. According to advices from San Martino, a lamentable accident happened at the Hotel Fratazza. Fräulein Else T., a beautiful nineteen-year-old girl, daughter of the well-known lawyer . . . Of course, they'll say that I committed suicide over an unhappy love affair, or worse. Unhappy love affair? I should say not.

"My dear child" — I'll look at the end first. — "So again, do not be angry with us, my dear, good child, and be a thousand times —" — For Heaven's sake, they haven't killed themselves!! No; in that case there'd be a telegram from Rudi. — "My dear child, you can believe me how sorry we are that into your pleasant weeks of vacation"—as though I didn't always have a vacation, unfortunately—"we must intrude with such unpleasant news." — Mother has a fearful style. — "But after mature consideration nothing else remains for me. Briefly and to the point, Father's

situation has become acute. I don't know what to think or do." — Why so many words? — "It involves a comparatively ridiculous sum—thirty thousand gulden," —ridiculous?—"which must be obtained in three days, else all is lost." — For Heaven's sake, what does that mean? — "Think of it, my dear child, the Baron Höning" —who, the district attorney?— "summoned Father to his office today. You know, of course, how the Baron respects Father. Yes, even loves him. A few years ago, when matters also hung by a hair, he spoke personally to the chief creditors and put affairs in shape at the last moment. But this time nothing can be done if the money is not forthcoming. Besides the fact that we shall be ruined, there will be a scandal, the like of which there has never been. Think of it. A lawyer, a famous lawyer—who—no, I cannot write it down. I fight constantly against tears. You know, child, for you are intelligent, we have been, God help us, several

times in similar situations and the family has always helped us out. Last time, one hundred twenty thousand were involved. But that time Father had to sign an agreement that he never would approach our relatives again, especially Uncle Bernhard." — Well, go on, go on. What's the point? What can I do about it? — "The only one of whom I could think as a last resort would be Uncle Victor, but he, unfortunately, is on a journey to the North Cape or Scotland" — yes, he's well off, the nasty fellow—"and he is absolutely unreachable, at least for the time being. Among Father's colleagues, especially, Dr. Sch., who frequently has helped out Father" — good Lord, how do we stand there?—"is no longer to be thought of, now that he has married again." — Well, what then? What do you want me to do? — "And now a letter has come, my dear child, in which you mention among others, Dorsday, who is also staying in Fratazza, and that seems like a stroke of

Fate. You know how often Dorsday came to visit us in former years." — Well, not so often. — "It is sheer accident that we have seen him less frequently in the last two or three years; he is supposed to be deeply entangled—between you and me, nothing very fine." — Why "between you and me"? — "At the Residenzklub Father plays whist with him every Thursday and in the past winter he saved him a pretty piece of money in an action against another art dealer. Furthermore, why should you not know it? He came to your father's assistance before." — I thought so. — "That time only a mere bagatelle was involved—eight thousand gulden—but after all, thirty isn't a great sum for Dorsday. So I wondered whether you could not do us a favor and speak to Dorsday." — What? — "He always liked you particularly." — Never noticed it. He stroked my cheeks when I was twelve or thirteen years old. "Quite a young lady already." — "And as Father, luckily, has not

approached him again since the eight thousand, he probably will also not decline this favor. He is supposed to have made eighty thousand a few days ago on a Rubens which he sold to America. Naturally, you may not mention this." — Do you think I'm a goose, Mother? — "But otherwise you can talk to him quite frankly. You might also mention, if occasion arises, that Baron Höning has summoned Father, and that with thirty thousand the worst will be averted, not only for the time being, but, God willing, forever" — do you really believe that, Mother? — "for the Erbesheimer case, which seems to be brilliantly promising, will surely bring Father a hundred thousand. But, of course, he cannot demand anything from Erbesheimer in this instance. So I beg of you, my child, speak to Dorsday. I assure you there is no harm in it. Father could simply have telegraphed him—we discussed it seriously—but it is something quite different, my child, when one speaks face to face with

a person. The money must be here on the fifth, at noon. Dr. F." — Who is Dr. F.? Oh, yes, Fiala. — "is implacable. Of course, there is also personal ill-feeling in the matter, but as, unfortunately, it concerns trust funds" — for Heaven's sake, Father, what have you done? — "we can do nothing. And if the money is not in Fiala's hands by twelve noon on the fifth, he will ask an order of arrest. Baron Höning will restrain him that long. So Dorsday would have to transfer the amount by telegraph through his bank to Dr. F. Then we are saved. Otherwise, God knows what will happen. Believe me, you will not reproach yourself in the least, my dear child. Father was doubtful at first. He even made efforts in two directions, but he came home quite in despair," — can Father ever be in despair? — "perhaps not so much because of the money, but because people have acted so shamefully toward him. One of them was once Father's best friend. You can imagine whom I mean." — I can

imagine nothing at all. Father has had so many best friends and actually none at all. Possibly Warnsdorf? — "Father came home at one o'clock and now it is four o'clock in the morning. He is sleeping at last, thank God." — It might be best for him if he never woke up. — "As soon as possible I shall post this letter myself, special delivery, so that you will receive it on the morning of the third." — How did Mother think that possible? She never knows her way about in these things. — "So speak at once with Dorsday, I beseech you, and telegraph at once how it came out. Do not, for God's sake, let Aunt Emma notice anything. It is sad enough that in a case like this one cannot turn to one's only sister, but one might just as well speak to a stone. My dear, dear child, I am so sorry that you must live through such things in your youth, but believe me, Father is only in the smallest way at fault." — Who then, Mother? — "Now we hope to God that the Erbesheimer case will, in every respect,

mark a change in our affairs. Only, we shall have to survive these few weeks. It would surely be irony if a catastrophe occurred over the thirty thousand gulden." — She doesn't mean seriously that Father will commit—But would not the other be even worse? — "Now I close, my child. I hope that in any circumstance" — in any circumstance? — "you will be able to remain in San Martino at least until the ninth or tenth. You must not return, in any case, for our sake. Remember me to your aunt—continue to be nice to her. So again, do not be angry with us, my dear good child, and be a thousand times" — Yes, I know that already.

So, I am to solicit Herr von Dorsday. . . . Idiotic. What does Mother take me for? Why didn't Father simply board a train and come up here immediately? — He would have arrived at the same time as the special delivery letter. But perhaps they might have caught him at the station— that *would* have been terrible. I'm sure

no one will help us out with thirty thousand gulden. Always the same story for the last seven years. No, even longer than that. Who would believe it to look at me? No one would believe it to look either at Father or at me, and yet everybody knows it. It's a miracle that we still can keep our heads up. One becomes used to things quickly. As a matter of fact, we're living quite well. Mother's really an artist. It seems inconceivable that we had a dinner for fourteen people last New Year's — but the two pair of party gloves I had — oh, they were a sad affair. And when Rudi wanted three hundred gulden recently, Mother almost wept. But Father's always good-natured. Always? No, not always. When we heard "Figaro" recently, a look came over his face suddenly that really frightened me.—In a moment he seemed to become an altogether different man.— But after the opera we dined at the Grand Hotel and then he was just as brilliant as ever.

And now I'm holding the letter in my hand. The letter's altogether idiotic. I'm to speak to Dorsday. I'd just die of shame. — Shame? Why, what have I to be ashamed of? I'm not to blame. — If I only could speak to Aunt Emma. But that's nonsense. She probably hasn't as much money as all that to give away. And Uncle is nothing more than a miser. O God, why haven't I any money? Why haven't I ever earned anything? Why didn't I ever study? Oh, I've learned something. No one can say that I'm altogether unaccomplished. I play the piano; I can speak French, English and a little Italian; I've attended lectures. — Haha! And even if I had done more worth-while things than that, what good would they do me now? Certainly I couldn't have saved thirty thousand gulden by this time. —

The Alpine glow has died out. The evening's no longer wonderful. The surroundings seem sad. No, not the surroundings, but life itself is sad, and here I'm sitting

quietly on the window sill, and Father is to be locked up. No, never, never! It mustn't be! I'll save him! Yes, Father, I'll save you! It's very simple. Just a few nonchalant words in my best manner. — Haha. I'll treat Herr Dorsday as if it were an honor for him to lend us money. And it *is* an honor. — Herr von Dorsday, possibly you have a few moments' time for me. I've just received a letter from Mother. She's temporarily embarrassed — rather, Father — "Why, certainly, my dear lady, with the greatest of pleasure. How much is involved?" — I wish he didn't have this revolting effect on me. And the manner he has of looking at me! No, Herr Dorsday, I'm not taken in by your elegant manner and your monocle and your air of nobility. You might just as well be an old-clothes man as an art dealer. — But, Else, Else, what makes you say a thing like that? — Oh, I can permit myself a remark of this sort. Nobody notices it in me. I'm even a blonde, a straw-

berry blonde, and Rudi looks absolutely like an aristocrat. Of course, one can notice it easily in Mother, especially in her speech, but not at all in Father. Really they ought to notice it in me. More than that—let them notice it. I don't deny it and certainly Rudi doesn't. Quite the contrary. I wonder what Rudi would do if Father were put in jail. Would he shoot himself? What nonsense! Shooting and jail—all these things don't happen. They just appear in the newspapers. —

The air is like champagne. In an hour we'll have dinner—"dîner." I just can't bear Cissy. She doesn't care the least bit about her little girl. What shall I wear? The blue or the black one? Black seems to be the right color for today. Too décolleté? *Toilette de circonstance,* as they say in French novels. At all events, I must look seductive when I interview Dorsday. After the dîner, I'll act nonchalantly. He'll stare his eyes out. Odious fellow. I hate him. I hate all people. Must it be

Dorsday? Is Dorsday really the only person in the whole world who has thirty thousand gulden? Suppose I tell Paul about it. If he told Aunt that he had gambling debts he'd certainly be able to get the money. —

It's almost dark now. Night. Deathly night. Oh, I wish I were dead. — It just can't be true. Couldn't I go down right now and speak to Dorsday before dinner? Oh, how terrible! — Paul, if you give me thirty thousand you may have anything of me that your heart desires. No, that speech also comes out of a novel. The noble daughter sells herself for the sake of her beloved father and ends up by finding great joy in it. Oh, that's terrible. No, Paul, you can't have me even for thirty thousand. But for a million? — Or for a palace, or for a pearl necklace? If I marry some day I'll probably do it cheaper. Is it actually so bad? Fanny really sold herself. She told me that her husband makes her shudder. How would you like it, Father, if I auctioned myself off this

evening just to save you from prison? It would make a sensation — ! I have fever, I'm sure of it. Perhaps it's the air, like champagne. — If Fred were only here he could advise me. I need no advice. There's no advice to give. I'll talk to Herr Dorsday of Eperies and I'll appeal to him, I, the haughty, the aristocrat, the Marchesa, the beggar-maid, the embezzler's daughter. How have I come to this? No one is a better climber than I am; no one has so much spunk. I'm a sporting girl. I should have been born in England, or else been a Countess.

There are my clothes hanging in the closet. I wonder whether the green felt has already been paid for, Mother. Only one installment, I think. I'll wear the black one. They all stared at me yesterday, even the pale little man with the golden pince-nez. I don't look exactly beautiful today but I do look interesting. I should have gone on the stage. Bertha already has had three lovers and no one thinks less of her

for it. In Düsseldorf it was the manager. In Hamburg she lived with a married man at the Atlantic Hotel—rooms with bath. I'm sure she's proud of it. They're all stupid. I'll have a hundred lovers, a thousand; why not? Is the décolleté deep enough? If I were married it could be even deeper. — How fortunate, Herr von Dorsday, that I meet you here. I've just received a letter from Vienna . . . I'll take the letter with me in case of emergency. Shall I ring for the maid? No, I'll dress myself alone. I need no one to help me with the black gown. If I were rich I'd never travel without a personal maid.

I'd better turn on the light. It's getting cool, so I'll close the window. — It won't be necessary to pull down the shade. Nobody's standing over there on the hill with a telescope. — Herr von Dorsday, I've just received a letter. — Oh, perhaps it'll be better to do it all after dinner when both of us will be in a lighter mood. It might

do me good to drink a glass of wine first. On the other hand, dinner would prove very much more appetizing if I finished the whole business beforehand. — All these wonderful dishes: Pudding à la merveille, fromage et fruits divers. Yes, but what if Herr von Dorsday should say No? — And suppose he grew impertinent. Oh, no, nothing like that could happen. No one ever has been impertinent with me. Of course, Brandel, the young marine lieutenant, went a little too far, but he was so good-natured about it all. — I am getting thin again. That's becoming to me. — Darkness is peering in again—peering in like a ghost—like a hundred ghosts. Ghosts are rising up out of the meadow. How far away is Vienna? How long ago did I leave it? Oh, I feel so all alone! When will I marry? Who would marry the daughter of an embezzler? — Herr von Dorsday, I've just received a letter. — "Oh, Fräulein Else, pray don't waste your breath talking to me about it. Just yester-

day I sold a Rembrandt. Pray, Fräulein Else, don't shame me by mentioning it." And now he's tearing a page out of his check book and signing it with his golden fountain pen; and tomorrow morning I'll take the train to Vienna. Oh, yes, I'll do that in any case, check or no check. I can't stay here any longer. I can't, and I won't. I'm living here as a smart, elegant young woman, while Father is back there in Vienna with one foot in the grave—or rather in jail. — Well, so this is the last pair of silk stockings. But nobody can notice the little rip under the knee. No one? Who can tell? Don't be frivolous, Else. — Bertha's nothing but a hussy. But is Christine even the least bit better? Her future husband has a pleasant prospect ahead of him. I'm sure Mother was always a faithful wife. But I'll never be faithful. I'm haughty, but I'll never be faithful. Filous attract me too much. I am sure that the Marchesa is in love with a Filou. If Fred knew me as I really am, his venera-

tion for me would disappear at once.— "Everything would have been possible for you, Fräulein. You could have been a pianist, or a bookkeeper, or an actress. There is no end of possibilities in you, but you have always been too well off." Too well off. Haha. Fred overestimates me. As a matter of fact, I've no talent at all. — Who knows, I might have gone as far by this time as Bertha, but I lack energy. A young woman of good family. — Haha, good family! And the father embezzles trust funds. Why did you do this to me, Father? If only you had something to show for it—but gambling on the exchange! Is the effort worth it? And the thirty thousand won't help you, either. It might for three months. But in the end you'd be ruined. A year and a half ago you were almost in the same position as you are now. Help came then, but some time help won't come, and then what will happen to us? Rudi'll go to the Vanderhulst bank in Rotterdam, but what'll become

of me? A wealthy husband. Oh, if I could only concentrate on that! Today I'm really beautiful. It's probably because I'm excited. For whom am I beautiful today? Was I happier while Fred was here? Oh, Fred isn't really the right man for me. He isn't a Filou, but I'd marry him if he had money. And then, no doubt, a Filou would come along—and the fun would begin. — Herr von Dorsday, wouldn't you like to be a Filou? — At a distance you sometimes look like one. Just like a dissipated vicomte, like a Don Juan —with your stupid monocle and your white flannel suit. But, really, you aren't a Filou at all. — Have I everything? Am I ready for dinner? — But what is there to do for a whole hour in case I don't meet Dorsday? What if he's walking with Frau Winawer? She really isn't unhappy at all. She doesn't need thirty thousand gulden. Well, then I'll sit down in the hall, look magnificent in a fauteuil, skim over the Illustrated News and the Vie Parisienne,

cross my legs, — no one will notice the rip under the knee. Perhaps a millionaire has just arrived. — I'll take along the white shawl. It's becoming to me. I'll throw it carelessly over my gorgeous shoulders. For whom have I gorgeous shoulders? I could make a man happy, if the right man for me only existed. But I'll not have children. I'm not maternal. Marie Weil is maternal. So is Mother. Aunt Irene is maternal. I have a noble brow and a beautiful figure. — "If I only were permitted to paint you as I want to, Fräulein Else." — Yes, that would please you. I don't even remember his name. I know that it wasn't Titian; therefore, it was just plain impertinence. — I've just received a letter, Herr von Dorsday. — I need a bit more powder on my throat and neck, a drop of Verveine in my handkerchief. So; I'll lock the cabinet, open the windows. Oh, it's too marvelous for tears! I'm nervous. Hasn't one the right to be nervous under circumstances like these? I'll put the box

with the veronal in it under my chemises. I need new chemises too. That'll be another nuisance. Oh, Lord!

It's uncanny, that enormous Cimone, as if it were ready to fall down on me. Not a star yet in the sky. The air is like champagne! And the perfume from the meadows! I'll live in the country. I'll marry a landowner and have children. Possibly the only man with whom I might have been happy was Dr. Froriep. What wonderful evenings those two were—first at Kniep and then at the Artists' Ball. Why did he disappear so suddenly? Perhaps because of Father. Yes; that's probably it. I'll blow a kiss up into the air before I go downstairs to that rabble. But to whom shall I send my greeting? I'm all alone. No one can imagine how terribly alone I am. Good evening, my lover! Who? Good evening, my bridegroom! Who? Good evening, my friend! Who? — Fred? — Hardly. I'll keep the window open even if it is growing cool. I'll turn on the light.

So. — Yes, that's right. Here's the letter. I'll take it with me to be prepared for any emergency. I'll keep the book there on the table. No matter what happens I'll read further tonight in "Notre Cœur." Good evening, lovely lady of the looking-glass. Think well of me. Farewell. . . .

Well, why do I lock the door? Nothing will be stolen here. I wonder whether Cissy leaves her door open at night, or does she open it only after he knocks? I wonder whether it's quite safe. Oh, certainly it is. — The stairs are altogether empty. They always are at this time. My steps are echoing. I've been here three weeks now. I left Gmunden on the twelfth of August. Gmunden was a bore. I wonder where Father got the money to send Mother and me to the country. And even Rudi traveled for four weeks. God knows where he traveled. He didn't write twice during the whole time. I just can't understand our way of living. Mother no longer has any jewelry. — I wonder why Fred was in

Gmunden for only two days. I'm sure he has a mistress there, though it doesn't seem possible. Nothing seems possible. He hasn't written to me for a whole week. He writes lovely letters. — Who's that sitting over there at the little table? No, it isn't Dorsday. Thank God for that. It would be impossible to talk to him now before dinner. — Why is the porter looking at me so curiously? I wonder whether he read Mother's special delivery letter. Am I going crazy? I must give him a tip soon again. — The blonde over there is already dressed for dinner. How can anybody be as fat as that? — I'll go out in front of the hotel and stroll up and down a bit, or shall I go into the music room? Isn't someone playing there? It sounds like a Beethoven Sonata. How can anyone play a Beethoven Sonata in this place? I've neglected my piano playing. As soon as I return to Vienna I'll practice regularly again. In fact, I'll start an entirely new life. We all must do that. Nothing like

this must ever happen again. I'll talk to Father in all seriousness—if there's still time for it. There'll be time. There certainly will. Why haven't I done it already? Everything at home is settled in a jesting manner and yet none of us is really gay at heart. Each is really afraid of the other and each is all alone, by himself. Mother's alone just because she isn't bright enough and doesn't know anything about anyone. She knows nothing about me, nor about Rudi, nor about Father. But she doesn't know that she doesn't know and neither does Rudi. He's really a good, handsome fellow, but he gave promise for more when he was twenty-one. It'll do him good to go to Holland, but where shall I go? I'd like to travel and do just exactly as I please. If Father runs away to America I'll go with him. I feel all confused. . . . The porter probably thinks me insane —the way I sit here on the bench, staring into space. I'll light a cigarette. Where's my cigarette case? Upstairs. But where,

upstairs? I put the veronal in with the underwear but where did I put the cigarette case? Here come Cissy and Paul. She's evidently decided she must get dressed for dinner, otherwise they would have kept on playing in the dark. — They don't see me. I wonder what he's saying to her. Why does she laugh so inanely? It would be amusing to write an anonymous letter to her husband in Vienna. Would I do such a thing? Never. But, who knows? They've just seen me. I'm bowing to them. She's piqued that I'm looking so well. She certainly seems embarrassed.

"Dressed for dinner so soon, Else?" — Why "dinner" this time, instead of "dîner"? She's never consistent. — "As you notice, Frau Cissy." — *"You really look ravishing, Else. It would give me the greatest pleasure to make love to you."* — "Don't trouble to, Paul. I'd rather have a cigarette." — *"With pleasure."* — "Thank you. How did your singles match come out?" — *"Frau Cissy beat me three times*

in succession." — "*He was absent-minded. By the way, Else, do you know that the Crown Prince of Greece is expected here tomorrow?*" — What's the Crown Prince of Greece to me? "Oh, really!" — Heavens! There's Dorsday with Frau Winawer. They're bowing to me. Now they're going on. I returned the bow too politely. Not as I usually do. Oh, what a strange person I am! — "*Can't you light your cigarette, Else?*" — "Oh, give me another match, please. Thank you." — "*Your shawl is very pretty, Else. It looks perfectly marvelous with the black dress. And now I must change my clothes.*" — I'd rather she stayed. I'm afraid of Dorsday. — "*And I've ordered the hairdresser for seven o'clock. She's excellent—spends the winter in Milan. Well, adieu, Else, adieu, Paul.*" — "*Küss' die Hand,* gnädige Frau." — "Adieu, Frau Cissy." — She's gone. I'm glad that Paul, at least, is staying. — "*May I sit with you a moment, Else, or am I intruding on your*

reveries?" — "Why on my reveries? Perhaps on my realities." That really means nothing. I'd rather he left me. I *must* speak to Dorsday. There he is, still standing with the unhappy Frau Winawer. He's bored. I can see it. He'd like to come over to me. — *"Then there are realities on which I may not intrude?"* — What is he saying? He can go to the devil! Why do I smile at him so coquettishly? I don't mean it for him at all. Dorsday's leering at me. Where am I? Where am I? — *"What's the matter with you today, Else?"* — "What do you think is the matter?" — *"You're secretive, devilish, misleading."* — "Don't talk nonsense, Paul." — *"One could go mad looking at you."* — What is he thinking of? What sort of nonsense is he talking? He's good-looking. The cigarette smoke catches in his hair. But I can't make use of him now. — *"You're looking past me in such a peculiar way. Why, Else?"* — I won't answer. I can't make use of him now. I'll look as disagreeable

as possible. No conversation now. — *"Your thoughts are somewhere else."* — "That's quite possible." He's nothing to me. Does Dorsday know that I'm waiting for him? I don't see him but I know that he's looking at me. — *"Well then—good-bye, Else."* — Thank God! He's kissing my hand. He's never done that. "Adieu, Paul." Where did I acquire that melting voice? He's leaving—the fraud! Probably he has to arrange details about tonight with Cissy. I wish him great joy. I'll draw the shawl about my shoulders and rise and go out in front of the hotel. Probably it'll be a trifle cool now. Too bad that my coat—ah, I hung it in the porter's office this morning. I can feel Dorsday's gaze on my back, piercing through the shawl. Frau Winawer is going up to her room now. How do I know that? Telepathy. "I beg your pardon, Mr. Porter." — *"Fräulein wishes her coat?"* — "Yes, please." — *"The evenings are beginning to be cool. It comes on suddenly here."* —

"Thank you." Ought I really to go in front of the hotel? Surely. Why not? At least to the door. Now they're passing by, one after the other. The gentleman with the golden pince-nez; the tall, blond one with the green vest; they all look at me. The little Geneva girl is pretty. No; she's from Lausanne. It really isn't so cool.

"Good evening, Fräulein Else." — Heavens! It's Dorsday. I won't mention Father. Not a word. Only after dinner. Or, I'll go to Vienna tomorrow. I'll go to Dr. Fiala myself. Why didn't I think of that immediately? I'm turning about, looking as though I didn't know who was standing behind me. — "Ah, Herr von Dorsday." — *"Would you still like to take a little stroll, Fräulein Else?"* — "Well, not exactly a stroll. Just a few turns before dinner." — *"We have almost half an hour."* — "Really." It really isn't so cool. The mountains are blue. It would be jolly if he suddenly proposed to me.

— *"There surely isn't a prettier spot in the world than this."* — "You find it so, Herr von Dorsday. But please don't tell me that the air is like champagne." — *"No, Fräulein Else. I only say that when we reach two thousand meters. And here we are hardly sixteen hundred and fifty above sea level."* — "Does that make such a difference?" — *"Certainly. Were you ever in the Engadin?"* — "No, never. Is the air there really like champagne?" — *"One might almost say so. But champagne is not my favorite beverage. I prefer this vicinity for its wonderful forests."* How tiresome he is! Doesn't he realize it? He obviously doesn't know what to say to me? It would be simpler with a married woman. A slightly indecent remark and the conversation is well under way. — *"Will you stay a while here in San Martino, Fräulein Else?"* Idiotic. Why do I look at him so coquettishly? He's already smiling knowingly. Oh, how stupid men are! "That depends partly on my aunt." That isn't

really true. I could go alone to Vienna. "Probably until the tenth." — *"Your mother is still in Gmunden?"* — "No, Herr von Dorsday. She's been back in Vienna for three weeks. Father is also in Vienna. This year he's taken a vacation of less than a week. I believe the Erbesheimer case is making a lot of work for him." — *"I can imagine that. But your father is probably the only one who can save Erbesheimer. Success is already indicated by the fact that it has become a civil action."* — That's good. That's good. "I'm pleased to hear that you have so favorable a premonition." — *"Premonition? How so?"* — "That Father is to win the case for Erbesheimer." — *"I shouldn't assert that too confidently."* — How? Is he retreating? That won't do him any good. "Oh, I believe in premonitions and fancies. Think of it, Herr von Dorsday, just today I received a letter from home." That was not so good. He looks rather astonished. But go on. Don't hesitate. He's a good old

friend of Father's. Go on. Go on. Now or never! "Herr von Dorsday, you just spoke so well of Father that it would be downright wrong if I weren't completely honest with you." What calves' eyes he is making at me! Oh, dear, he notices something. Go on. Go on. "For there was talk of you in that letter, Herr von Dorsday. It is, in fact, a letter from Mother." — "*So.*" — "Really a very sad letter. You know our circumstances, Herr von Dorsday." — For Heaven's sake, I really have tears in my voice. Go on. Go on. There's no retreat now. Thank God! "To be short and to the point, Herr von Dorsday, we are once more in—in the usual situation." — Now he'd like to disappear. "It involves—a small amount. Really only a bagatelle, Herr von Dorsday. And yet, so Mother writes, everything depends on it." I ramble on as stupidly as a cow. — "*Please calm yourself, Fräulein Else.*" — He said that nicely. But he needn't pat my arm on that account.

— *"What, then, really is the trouble, Fräulein Else? What is in that sad letter from Mother?"* — "Herr von Dorsday, Father"— My knees are trembling. — "Mother writes that Father"— *"But for goodness' sake, Else, what's wrong? Wouldn't you rather—here's a bench. May I put your coat about you? It's rather cool."* — "Thanks, Herr von Dorsday. Oh, it's nothing. Nothing special." So—suddenly I'm sitting on the bench. Who's the lady coming this way? I don't know her at all. If only I didn't have to say more. How he stares at me! How could you ask this of me, Father? That wasn't right of you, Father. But now it's happened. I should have waited until after dinner. — *"Well, Fräulein Else."* — His monocle's dangling. That looks silly. Shall I answer him? I must. Quickly now, and have it over with. After all, what could happen to me? He's a friend of Father's. "Oh, Lord, Herr von Dorsday, after all, you're an old friend of our family." I said that very well.

"And probably you won't be surprised when I tell you that Father is once again in a very dangerous position." How remarkable my voice sounds! Is it I speaking? Am I perhaps dreaming? I certainly must have an entirely different voice than usual. — *"It certainly does not surprise me completely. You are right about that, dear Fräulein Else—even though I regret it deeply."* — Why do I look at him so pleadingly? Smile. Smile. It will work. — *"I feel most friendly towards your Father—towards all of you."* — He oughtn't to look at me that way. It's indecent. I'll speak differently and stop smiling. I must act more worldly. "Well, Herr von Dorsday, now you will have an opportunity to demonstrate your friendship for my father." Thank Heavens, I have my old voice again. "It seems, Herr von Dorsday, that among all our friends and relations—most of them are not yet back in Vienna—otherwise Mother probably wouldn't have hit on the idea. — The

other day in a letter to Mother, I casually mentioned your presence here in San Martino—among others, of course." — *"I took it for granted, Fräulein Else, that I wasn't the exclusive theme of your correspondence with Mother."* — Why does he press his knee against mine? Oh, I'll put up with it! What's the difference, once you've sunk so low? — "The matter's simply this: It's Dr. Fiala who seems to be causing particular trouble for Father this time." — *"Oh, Dr. Fiala."* — He evidently knows what kind of person Fiala is. "Yes, Dr. Fiala. And the sum involved is due on the fifth—that is, the day after tomorrow—at twelve noon—or rather, it must be in his hands, for if it isn't, Baron Höning —yes, think of it, the Baron summoned Father to him privately. He likes him so much." Oh, why am I speaking of Höning? That wasn't necessary. — *"You mean, Else, that otherwise an arrest would be inevitable?"* — Why does he put it so severely? I won't answer.

I'll merely nod. — *"Hm. That is really—bad. That is truly very—this greatly gifted, brilliant man. — And how much is really involved, Fräulein Else?"* — Why does he smile? He finds it "bad," and he smiles. What does his smile mean? Is the amount of no consequence to him? And if he says No! I'll do away with myself if he says No! So—I'm to name the sum. "What, Herr von Dorsday? Haven't I told you the amount? One million." Why did I say that? This is no time for joking! But then, when I tell him how much less it really is, he'll be pleased. How he'll open his eyes! Does he really think it possible that Father could be involved in a million — "Pardon me, Herr von Dorsday, for joking at a time like this. I can assure you that I'm not gay at heart." Yes, yes, press your knee against mine. You may take that liberty. "Of course, a million isn't involved. All in all, the amount runs to thirty thousand gulden, Herr von Dorsday, which must be in the

hands of Dr. Fiala by noon of the day after tomorrow. Yes. Mother writes that Father made every possible effort, but, as I said, the relatives we sought were not in Vienna." — Oh, Lord, how I've debased myself! "Otherwise, Father naturally wouldn't have thought of turning to you, Herr von Dorsday. Much less, ask me—" Why is he silent? Why doesn't he say Yes? Where's the check book? And the fountain pen? For Heaven's sake, he isn't going to say No! Shall I go down on my knees before him? Oh, God! Oh, God! —

"On the fifth, you say, Fräulein Else?" — Thank God! At least he's saying something. "Yes indeed. At noon of the day after tomorrow, Herr von Dorsday. Therefore, it'll be necessary to—I don't believe it could be done so late by letter." — *"Of course not, Fräulein Else. We'll have to telegraph."* — "We"—that's good. That's very good. — *"Well, that would be the least of it. How much did you say, Else?"* — He's heard me say it. Why does he tor-

ture me? "Thirty thousand, Herr von Dorsday. Really an absurdly small amount." Why did I say that? How stupid! But he's smiling. Stupid girl, he thinks. He's smiling quite amiably. Father is saved. He'd as soon lend me fifty thousand and then we could get ourselves all kinds of things. New chemises for me. How selfish I am! One gets that way. — *"Not quite so absurd, my dear child—"* Why does he say "dear child"? Is it a good sign or not? *"—as you imagine. Even thirty thousand gulden have to be earned."* — "Pardon me, Herr von Dorsday. I didn't mean it that way. I thought only how sad it was that Father— because of such a small amount—" Oh, Lord, I'm bungling it again! "You can't imagine, Herr von Dorsday, even if you have some knowledge of our circumstances, how terrible it is for me, and more especially for Mother." — He's putting a foot on the bench. Is that supposed to be good form, or what? — *"Oh, I can imagine it*

easily, dear Else." — How his voice sounds! Altogether different. Remarkable. — "*And I've often thought: a pity about this brilliant man.*" — Why does he say "a pity." Won't he give the money? No; he's merely generalizing. Why doesn't he say "Yes" once and for all—or does he take that for granted? How he stares at me! Why doesn't he say more? Oh, because the two Hungarian ladies are passing by. At least he's resumed a decent attitude now. The foot's no longer on the bench. The cravat's too bright for an elderly gentleman. Does his mistress select them for him? Nothing very fine, "between you and me," Mother writes. Thirty thousand gulden. But I'm smiling at him. Why am I smiling? Oh, I'm so cowardly! — "*If one really could take it for granted that something might be done with this amount. But —you're a clever creature, Else. What would thirty thousand gulden be? A drop in the bucket.*" — Oh, heavens! Doesn't he want to give the money? I musn't look

so frightened. Everything depends on this. Now I must say something intelligent and convincing. "Oh, no, Herr von Dorsday, this time it would be no mere drop in the bucket. The Erbesheimer case is at hand. Don't forget that, Herr von Dorsday, and today it's as good as won. And Father has other cases, too. Furthermore, I intend—you mustn't laugh, Herr von Dorsday—to talk very seriously to Father. He takes me seriously. I may say that if there's one person who can influence him, it is—" "*You certainly are a delightful creature, Fräulein Else.*" — His voice has that ring again. How disagreeable it is when men begin to "ring" this way. I don't like it in Fred, either. — "*A delightful creature, upon my word.*" — Why does he say "upon my word"? It's banal. It sounds like a small-town theatre. — "*But gladly as I would share your optimism—once the cart has gone astray.*" — "Not this time, Herr von Dorsday. If I didn't believe completely in Father, if I weren't completely

convinced that these thirty thousand gulden—" I don't know what to say now. I can't exactly beg. He's thinking it over. Obviously. Perhaps he doesn't know Fiala's address. Nonsense. The situation is impossible. I sit here like a poor sinner. He stands before me and puts his monocle into his eye and says nothing. I'll leave now. That'll be best. I won't be treated this way. Father may kill himself. I'll kill myself, too. It's a shameless life. It would be best to jump from that cliff and have it over with. It would serve everyone right. I'll go. — "*Fräulein Else.*" — "Pardon me, Herr von Dorsday, for bothering you at all. Everything considered, I can readily understand your inclination to refuse." So. I'm through. — "*Stay, Fräulein Else.*" — Stay? Why should I stay? He'll give the money. Yes, of course. He must. But I won't sit down again. I'll remain standing as though I were going in half a second. I'm a little taller than he is. — "*You haven't*

waited for my answer, Else. Once before —pardon me, Else, for referring to it in this connection—" He needn't say "Else" so often — "*I've been in a position to help your father out of a difficulty. To be sure, that was an—even more absurd sum than the present one—and I didn't flatter myself with the hope of ever seeing the money again. So there really seems to be no reason for refusing my assistance this time—and especially when a young girl like you, Else, comes in person as an intermediary.*" — What is he driving at? His voice "rings" no longer. Or it has a different "ring." How he stares at me! He'd better be careful! — "*And so, Else, I'm prepared—Dr. Fiala shall have thirty thousand gulden at noon of the day after tomorrow, on one condition.*" — He shouldn't say more. He's said quite enough. "Herr von Dorsday, I, I personally will guarantee that my father will return this sum as soon as he receives his fee from Erbesheimer. So far, Erbesheimer

has paid nothing. Not even a retainer. Mother herself wrote that to me." — "*Let it be, Else. One never should undertake a guarantee for another. Not even for one's self.*" — What does he want? His voice "rings" again. Never has anyone stared at me so! I suspect his intentions. He'd better be careful! — "*Could I have thought it possible an hour ago that I'd ever be in a position to dictate terms! And now I'm doing it. Yes, Else, after all, I'm only human and it isn't my fault that you're so beautiful, Else.*" — What does he want? What does he want? — "*Perhaps I might have asked of you today or tomorrow what I ask of you now. Even if you hadn't sought a million—I beg your pardon, thirty thousand—gulden from me. But really, if things had been otherwise, you hardly would have given me this opportunity to speak with you alone.*" — "Oh, I really have taken up too much of your time already, Herr von Dorsday." — That was well said. Fred would have been satisfied

with it. What's this? Is he reaching for my hand? What's the matter with him? — *"Haven't you been aware of it for a long time, Else?"* — He should let go of my hand. Now, thank Heaven, he's let go of it. Not so close. Not so close. — *"You wouldn't be a woman, Else, if you didn't notice it. Je vous désire."* — He didn't have to say that in French, the noble Vicomte. — *"Must I say more?"* — "You've said quite enough, Herr von Dorsday." I'm still standing here. Why? I'll leave. I'll leave without a word. — *"Else, Else."* — Now he's next to me again. — *"Forgive me, Else. I too have only been joking, just as you did a little while ago, about the million. My demand, too, shall not be so exorbitant—as you may have feared. So that the lesser demand will, perhaps, be a pleasant surprise. Please stay, Else."* — And I actually remain here! Why? Here we are, facing each other. Shouldn't I simply have slapped his face? Wouldn't there still be time for that now? The two Englishmen

are passing. This would be the very minute. Right now. Why didn't I do it? I'm cowardly. I'm broken. I'm humiliated. What will he want now in place of the million? A kiss, perhaps. That might be considered. A million is to thirty thousand as—there are some funny comparisons. — *"If you really need a million some day, Else, you may be certain that I'll see to it, although I'm not a rich man. But this time I shall be reasonable, as you are. And this time I wish nothing more, Else, than—to see you."* — Is he crazy? He sees me. — Oh, he means it *that* way! Why don't I slap his face? The rotter! Have I turned red or pale? You want to see me naked? Many would like that! I'm beautiful when I'm naked. Why don't I slap his face? It's enormous. Why so close, you rotter? I don't want your breath on my cheeks. Why don't I just leave him? Are his eyes holding me? We glare at each other like deadly enemies. I'd like to call him a rotter to his face, but

I can't. Or don't I want to? — *"You look at me as though I were crazy, Else. Perhaps I am slightly so. For there's a magic in you, Else, that you yourself can't realize. You must understand, Else, that my request implies no insult. Yes—request, I say. Though to you it may seem dangerously like coercion. But I'm no coercionist. I'm only a man who has had many experiences—among others, this: that everything in the world has its price, and that anyone who gives away his money when he might receive a return for it is a consummate fool. And—parting with what I wish to buy this time, Else, much as it is, will not make you poorer. And that the transaction will remain a secret between you and me, Else—that I swear to you by —by all the charms whose revelation will make me happy."* — Where did he learn to talk like that? It sounds like a book. — *"And I swear to you that I will never take any unfair advantage of the situation created by our agreement. I ask of you only*

to be allowed to stand for a quarter of an hour in contemplation of your beauty. My room is on the same floor as yours, Else. Number Sixty-five. Easy to remember. The Swedish tennis player you mentioned today—wasn't he just sixty-five years old?" — He's crazy. Why do I let him go on? I'm paralyzed. — *"But if for any reason you don't care to visit me in room Number Sixty-five, Else, then I suggest a little stroll after dinner. There's a clearing in the woods. I discovered it by chance the other day. Hardly five minutes from our hotel. — It will be a wonderful summer night, almost warm, and the starlight will clothe you divinely."* — He speaks as he would to a slave. I feel like spitting in his face. — *"You need not answer immediately, Else. Think it over. After dinner, you may render your decision."* — Why does he say "render"? What a stupid word: "render." — *"Think it over calmly. Perhaps you'll come to the conclusion that I'm not merely driving a bargain with you."* — What else,

you whining rotter! — *"Perhaps you'll suspect that a man is speaking to you, a man who is rather lonesome and not particularly happy, and who, perhaps, deserves a little sympathy."* — Affected rotter! He speaks like a poor actor. His manicured fingers look like claws. No! No! I won't! Why don't I tell him so? Kill yourself, Father. What is he doing with my hand? My arm's quite limp. He draws my hand to his lips. Hot lips. Augh! My hand's cold. I'd like to knock his hat off. Ha, how funny that would be! Had your fill of kissing, you rotter? — The arc lamps in front of the hotel are already lighted. Two windows are open in the third story. The one in which the curtain is stirring is mine. Something's shining on the cabinet. There's nothing on it. Only a brass ornament. — *"So, auf Wiedersehen, Else."* — I don't answer. I stand here motionless. He looks into my eyes. My face is blank. He knows nothing. He doesn't know whether I'll come or not.

Neither do I. I only know that everything's over. I'm half dead. There he goes. A little bent. Rotter! He senses that I'm staring after him. Whom is he greeting? Two ladies. He bows as if he were a Count. Paul ought to challenge him and shoot him. Or Rudi. What does he think anyway? Brazen fellow! Never, never! There's nothing left to do, Father. You'll have to kill yourself. — The couple obviously is returning from a trip. Both handsome, he and she. Have they time to change their clothes before dinner? They're surely on their honeymoon—or perhaps they aren't married at all. I'll never go on a honeymoon. Thirty thousand gulden. No, no, no. Aren't there thirty thousand gulden somewhere in the world? I'll go to see Fiala. Mercy, mercy, Dr. Fiala. With pleasure, my dear young lady. And there's my bedroom. — Please, Paul, do me a favor. Ask your Father for thirty thousand gulden. Tell him you have gambling debts. That

otherwise you must shoot yourself. "Gladly, my dear cousin. My room is Number So-and-so, and I'll expect you at midnight." Oh, Herr von Dorsday, how modest you are. For the time being, at least. Now he's dressing, putting on a smoking jacket. Now we each go our own way. The meadow by moonlight or Room Number Sixty-five. Will he wear his smoking jacket when he's in the woods with me?

There's still time before dinner. A little walk. Let's think it over calmly. I'm a lonesome old man—ha, ha! Heavenly air, like champagne. It's no longer cool. — Thirty thousand . . . thirty thousand. . . . I must look very pretty in this wide landscape. Too bad there aren't more people in the clearing. Obviously I'm attractive to the gentleman out there near the edge of the wood. Oh, my dear sir, I'm even more beautiful naked, and the price is laughable. Thirty thousand gulden. Perhaps you'll bring your friends with you. Then it'll be cheaper for each one. Let's

hope you have many handsome friends, handsomer and younger than Herr von Dorsday. Do you know Herr von Dorsday? He's a rotter. Vile rotter. . . .

Oh, I must think it over. . . . A human life is at stake. Father's life. But no—he won't kill himself. He'd rather be imprisoned. Three years at hard labor—or five. He's been living in terror of this for five or ten years. . . . Trust funds. . . . And Mother, too. And even I. — For whom will I have to strip next time? Or shall we make permanent arrangements with Herr von Dorsday for simplicity's sake? His present mistress is nothing very fine. "Just between you and me." He'd certainly prefer me. I'm not at all sure that I'm so much finer. Don't take on airs, Fräulein Else. I could tell tales about you. . . . A certain dream, for instance, that you've had three times now—and that you haven't even told to your friend Bertha. And she's going through something. And what was that affair a little while ago in

Gmunden? Six o'clock in the morning, on the balcony, my proud Fräulein Else. Perhaps you didn't notice the two young people in a boat who were staring at you. Of course they couldn't identify my face at that distance, but they couldn't help noticing that I was in negligee. And it made me happy. Oh, more than happy. It was intoxicating. I drew my hands across my hips and acted as though I didn't know that anyone saw me—and the boat didn't move from the spot. Yes—I'm like that. Indeed I am. I'm a hussy. They all know it. Even Paul knows it. Of course, he's a woman's specialist; and the marine lieutenant knew it too, and so did the painter. Only Fred doesn't know it, the stupid fellow. For he loves me. But I'd rather not be naked in front of him. Never, never! I wouldn't like it at all. I'd be ashamed. But for the Filou with the Roman head—how gladly! Even if I had to die the next minute. But I wouldn't have to die the next minute. One can go through all sorts

of experiences. Bertha has gone through more.

No, no, I won't! I'll go to anyone else —but not to him. To Paul, for all I care. Or I'll pick somebody for myself this evening, at dinner. It's all the same. But I can't tell everyone that I want thirty thousand gulden in return. That would be like a woman from the Kärntnerstrasse. No; I won't sell myself. Never. I'll never sell myself. Yes; if once I find the right man, I'll give myself. But I'll not sell myself. I'll be a wanton, not a prostitute. You miscalculated, Herr von Dorsday. And so did Father. Yes, he miscalculated. He should have foreseen it. He knows people. He knows Herr von Dorsday. He could have known that Herr von Dorsday wouldn't give something for nothing. — Otherwise, he could have telegraphed, or come here himself. But this way it was easier and safer, wasn't it, Father? If a man has a pretty daughter, why must he be marched off to prison? And Mother, stupid as ever,

sits down and writes the letter. Father didn't trust himself to do it. If he had written, I should have noticed something peculiar immediately. But you won't succeed. No; you've counted too definitely on my childish affection, Father. You assumed too certainly that I'd rather undergo any indignity than let you suffer the consequences of your criminal frivolity. Certainly you're a genius. Herr von Dorsday says it. Everybody says it. But how does that help me? Fiala's a nobody, but he doesn't embezzle trust funds. Even Waldheim isn't to be mentioned in the same breath with you. . . . Who said that? Dr. Froriep. "Your father is a genius." And I've only heard him speak once! Last year at the assizes—for the first and last time. It was glorious. Tears ran down my cheeks. And the poor wretch he defended was acquitted. Perhaps he wasn't such a poor wretch. In any case, he only stole something. He didn't embezzle trust funds to play baccarat and speculate on the ex-

change. Now Father himself will be tried before the jury. It will be in all the papers. Second day of the trial, third day of the trial. The attorney for the defense arose to reply. Who will defend him? Not a genius this time. Nothing will help him. Unanimous verdict of guilty. Sentenced to five years. Stones, striped clothes, cropped hair. Visitors permitted once a month. I go there with Mother, third class. For we have no more money. No one lends us anything. A little home in Lerchenfelderstrasse, like the one in which I saw our seamstress ten years ago. We bring him something to eat. From where? For we have nothing ourselves. Uncle Victor will allow us an income. Three hundred gulden a month. Rudi will be in Holland with Vanderhulst—if they still think of him. A convict's children. Novel by Temme, in three volumes. Father receives us in the striped suit of the criminal. He doesn't look angry—merely sad. After all, he never can look angry.

—Else, if you had gotten me the money that time—that's what he'll think, but he'll say nothing. He won't have the heart to reproach me. He's endlessly kind, but he's careless. His weakness is the love for gambling. He can't help it. It's a sort of insanity. Perhaps they'll discharge him because he's insane. And he didn't give enough thought to the letter. Perhaps it never occurred to him that Dorsday would take advantage of the situation and demand such an indignity of me. He's a good friend of the family. Once before, he loaned Father eight thousand gulden. Why should one suspect a man like that? Father certainly tried everything else first. What he must have suffered when he had Mother write this letter! He went from Warsdorf to Burin, from Burin to Wertheimstein, and God knows to whom next. He certainly went to Uncle Carl, too; and they've all left him in his trouble. All the so-called friends. And now Dorsday is his hope, his last hope, and if the money doesn't

arrive he'll kill himself. Of course he'll kill himself. He surely won't let them put him in prison. Examination, trial, assizes, jail, convict's clothes. No, no! When the summons comes, he'll shoot or hang himself. He'll hang himself from the window bars. They'll send word to us from the house across the way. The locksmith will have to open the door and I'll have been at fault. And now he's sitting with Mother smoking a Havana cigar in the very room in which he'll hang himself the day after tomorrow. Where does he keep on getting all the Havana cigars? I can hear him speaking as he quiets Mother. Depend on it, Dorsday will supply the money. Remember I saved him a great sum this winter through my intervention. And now comes the Erbesheimer case . . . — Surely. — I hear him speaking. Telepathy! Remarkable. I also see Fred this very moment. He's passing the casino in the city park with a girl. She's wearing a light blue waist and light shoes and she's a little

hoarse. I'm sure of all of it. When I go to Vienna I'll ask Fred whether he was in the city park with his sweetheart on the third of September between seven and eight o'clock.

What next? What's to be done? It's almost completely dark. How nice and quiet. No one near or far. They're already at dinner. Telepathy? No; that isn't telepathy. Because I heard the gong a little while ago. Where's Else? Paul will think. He'll notice it if I'm not there for the first course. They'll send up for me. What's wrong with Else? She's always so punctual. The two men at the window will think, Where's that pretty girl with the reddish blond hair today? And Herr von Dorsday will be frightened. He certainly is cowardly. Calm yourself, Herr von Dorsday, nothing will happen to you. I despise you far too much. If I wished it, you'd be a dead man tomorrow night. — I'm convinced that Paul would challenge you if I told him the story. I make you a

present of your life, Herr von Dorsday.

How tremendously broad the meadow is, and how terribly dark the mountains. Hardly any stars are out. Yes, a few—three, four—there'll soon be more. And it's so quiet in the wood behind me. It's pleasant to sit here on the bench, at the edge of the wood. The hotel's so distant, so distant, and the lights are like the lights of fairyland. And what rotters live in it! Oh, no—people, poor people; I pity them all. I even pity the Marchesa—I don't know why—and Frau Winawer and the nurse of Cissy's little girl. She doesn't eat at the table d'hôte. She has her dinner earlier, with Fritzi. What's this about Else? asks Cissy. What? Isn't she in her room? They're all worried about me. I can feel they are. Only I don't worry about myself. Yes, here I am in Martino di Castrozza, sitting on a bench at the edge of the wood, and the air is like champagne, and it seems to me that I'm crying. Yes, and why am I crying?

There's no reason for crying. My nerves are getting the better of me. I must control myself. I mustn't let myself go to pieces this way. But crying isn't at all unpleasant. Crying's always good for me. When I visited our old French nurse in the hospital—the one who died later—I also cried. At Grandmother's funeral, when Bertha left for Nuremberg, and when Agatha's baby died, and when we saw "Camille"—I cried then, too. Who'll cry when I'm dead? Oh, how beautiful it would be to be dead! I lie on a bier in the salon, with candles burning. Long candles. Twelve long candles. The hearse is already downstairs. People are standing at the gate. How old was she? Only nineteen. Really only nineteen? — Think of it, her father in jail. Why did she kill herself? Because she loved a Filou in vain. But what are you talking about? She was to have had a child. No; she fell from the Cimone. It's supposed to have been an accident. Good day, Herr

von Dorsday. You too pay your last respects to little Else. Little Else, the old woman says. — Why? Certainly; I must pay my last respects. Wasn't I the first one to disgrace her? Oh, it was worth the trouble, Frau Winawer. I've never seen such a beautiful body. It cost me only thirty million. A Rubens costs three times as much. She poisoned herself with hashish. She merely longed for beautiful visions, but she took too much and never awoke. Why is Herr von Dorsday wearing a red monocle? At whom is he waving that handkerchief? Mother comes down the steps and kisses his hand. Terrible, terrible. Now they whisper to each other. I can't understand a word, because I'm on a bier. The crown of violets about my brow came from Paul. The ribbons stream to the floor. No one trusts himself in the room. I'd rather get up and look out of the window. What a great, blue sea! A hundred ships with yellow sails. The waves glisten. So much sunlight. Re-

gatta. The men are wearing life preservers. The ladies are in bathing suits. That's indecent. They think I'm naked. How stupid they are! I'm wearing deep mourning, because I'm dead. I'll prove it to you. I'll lay myself on the bier again. Where is it now? It's gone. They've taken it away. They've embezzled it. That's why Father's in jail. And they've pardoned him after three years. The jailers all were bribed by Fiala. Now I'll go to the cemetery on foot. That'll save Mother the funeral expenses. We must economize. I'm going so quickly that no one follows me. Oh, how fast I can go! They're all still standing in the streets, marveling. How dare they stare so at one who's dead? This is oppressive. I'd rather go across the field. It's all blue with forget-me-nots and violets. The marine officers stand with swords at present-arms. Good morning, gentlemen. Open the gate. Open the gate, Sir Matador. Don't you recognize me? I'm the girl that

just died. . . . Therefore, you mustn't kiss my hand. Where's my grave? Is that embezzled too? Thank God, it's not the cemetery at all. It's the park in Mentone. Father'll be glad that I'm not buried. I'm not afraid of snakes. If only my foot isn't bitten by one. Oh, dear!

What's happened? Where am I? Have I been asleep? Yes; I've been asleep. I must have been dreaming. My feet are so cold. My right foot's cold. Why? There's a little rip in the stocking, across the ankle. Why am I still sitting in the woods. They must have rung for dinner long ago. "Dîner."

Oh, Lord, where was I? I was so far away! What was I dreaming? I think I was dead. And I had no sorrows and didn't have to rack my brains. Thirty thousand, thirty thousand . . . I haven't got them yet. I must earn them first. And here I'm sitting alone on the edge of the wood. The lights from the hotel are shining all the way over here. I must return.

It's terrible that I must return. There's no more time to be lost. Herr von Dorsday waits for my decision. Decision. Decision! No. No, Herr von Dorsday, once for all, No. You've been joking, of course, Herr von Dorsday. Yes; I'll say that to him. Oh, that's excellent! Your joke wasn't very delicate, Herr von Dorsday, but I'll forgive you. I'll telegraph Father in the morning, Herr von Dorsday, that the money will be in Dr. Fiala's hands punctually. Wonderful. I'll say that to him. There'll be nothing left for him to do; he'll have to send the money. Have to? Does he have to? And why does he have to? And if he did, he'd even the score in some way. He'd arrange it so that the money arrived too late. Or he'd send the money and tell everybody that he'd had me. But he won't send the money at all. No, Fräulein Else, that wasn't our bargain. Telegraph your Father what you please, I'll not send the money. You shan't believe, Fräulein Else, that I allow myself to be out-

witted by a mere girl—I, the Vicomte of Eperies.

I must walk carefully. The road's quite dark. Strangely enough, I feel better than I did. Nothing at all has changed and I feel better. What could I have been dreaming about? About a matador? What sort of matador was he? It's farther to the hotel than I thought. Surely they're still at dinner. I'll sit down quietly at the table. I'll tell them that I've had a sick headache and let them serve me later. Herr von Dorsday eventually will come to his senses and say that the whole affair was only a joke. Forgive me, Fräulein Else, forgive me for my bad joke. I've already telegraphed to my bank. But he won't say it. He hasn't telegraphed. Everything is as it was before. He's waiting. Herr von Dorsday is waiting. No! I don't want to see him. I can't see him any more. I don't want to see anyone any more. I don't want to return to the hotel; I don't want to return home; I don't want to re-

turn to Vienna; I don't want to go to anybody; to anyone at all; not to Father and not to Mother; not to Rudi and not to Fred; not to Bertha and not to Aunt Irene. She's still the best of them. She'd understand everything. But I'll have nothing more to do with her or with anybody else. If I were a magician, I'd be in some other part of the world. On some gorgeous ship in the Mediterranean, but not alone. With Paul, perhaps. Yes, I could imagine that very easily. Or I could be living in a villa by the sea, and we would be lying on the marble steps that lead into the water, and he'd be holding me close in his arms and biting my lips, as Albert did at the piano two years ago. The bounder! No. I'd like to lie alone by the sea on the marble steps and wait, and at last a man would come, or several men, and I'd choose one, and the others whom I'd reject would throw themselves despairingly into the sea. Or they'd have to be patient, until the next day. Oh, what a marvelous life that would be!

Why have I my glorious shoulders and my beautiful slender legs, and for what reason, after all, do I exist? And it would serve them right, all of them. They've brought me up only to sell myself one way or another. They wouldn't hear of acting. They laughed at me. It would have served them altogether right if last year I had married Wilomitzer, the stage director, who's almost fifty. If only they hadn't suggested things to me. Father, to be sure, seemed embarrassed. But Mother dropped some very plain hints.

How huge the hotel is! Like a monstrous, shining magic city. Everything's gigantic. The mountains, too. Terrifyingly so. They've never been so black. The moon hasn't risen yet. It'll rise only for the performance, for the great performance on the meadow, when Herr von Dorsday bids his slave dance naked. What's Herr von Dorsday to me? Well, Mademoiselle Else, what pretentious nonsense you are talking! You were prepared to be the

mistress of strange men, of one after the other. And the trifle which Herr von Dorsday asks horrifies you. You're prepared to sell yourself for a string of pearls, for beautiful clothes, for a villa by the sea, and the life of your father isn't worth as much as that? That would have been just the right start. That would have been the correct preface to everything else. You were guilty, I could say. You brought me to it. You're all to blame that I've become what I am. Not merely Father and Mother. Rudi's to blame, too, and Fred, and everybody; yes, everybody because no one has troubled himself about me. A little caress when you look pretty, a little anxiety when you have fever; they send you to school and you take lessons in piano and French at home; in the summer you go to the country and on your birthday you get presents; and they talk about all sorts of things at dinner. But what I feel—the things stirring and trembling in me—have you ever thought of that? Sometimes I could see something

of the sort in Father's eyes, but it passed quickly. The next moment he was wrapped up again in his practice and his troubles and his speculations. — And probably some common woman. Furtively. "Nothing very fine, between you and me." And I'd be alone again. Well, what would you do, Father? What would you do if I weren't here?

I'm standing here. Yes, here I'm standing in front of the hotel. — It'll be terrible to go in and see all the people, Herr von Dorsday, my Aunt Cissy. How pleasant it was a little while ago on the bench— when I was already dead. Matador. — If only I could remember what it was. — It was a regatta. — Right. — And I was watching it from the window. But who was the matador? — Oh, if only I weren't so tired, so terribly tired. And now, I'm to sit up until midnight and then slip quietly into Herr von Dorsday's room? Perhaps I'll meet Cissy in the hall. Does she wear anything under her kimono when she goes

to him? It's so difficult for a beginner! Oughtn't I to ask Cissy for advice? Of course, I mustn't tell her that it's Dorsday. I'd rather have her understand that I have a nightly rendezvous with one of the handsome young men in the hotel. For instance, the tall blond man with glowing eyes. But he's no longer here. He disappeared suddenly. I never even thought of him until this very minute. But unfortunately it's not the tall blond man with glowing eyes and it's not Paul. It's Herr von Dorsday. How shall I manage it? What shall I say to him? Just "Yes." And yet I can't visit Herr von Dorsday in his room. Of course he has all kinds of magnificent scent bottles on his washstand, and the room always smells of French perfume. No—not for anything in the world—I won't go to see him. It'll be better in the open. The sky's so high and the meadow's so wide. I mustn't think of Herr Dorsday at all. I mustn't even look at him. And if he dares to touch me, I'll kick him with my naked

feet. Oh, if it only were somebody else. Anybody else. He could have everything he wanted tonight. But not Dorsday. Not Dorsday! Not Dorsday! How his eyes will stab and drill their way into me. He'll stand there with his monocle and leer. But no; he won't leer. He'll look dignified. Aristocratic. For he's used to such things. How many has he seen—so? A hundred, or a thousand—but was there one among them like me? No; certainly not. I'll tell him he's not the first to see me this way. I'll tell him I have a lover—but only after the thirty thousand gulden have been sent to Fiala. Then I'll tell him that he's a fool. That he could have had me, as well, for the same amount. — That I've already had ten lovers—twenty—a hundred. — But he won't believe that of me. — And if he believed it, how would it help me? — If only I could spoil his pleasure somehow. If only someone else were present. Why not? He didn't stipulate that he had to be alone with me. Oh, Herr

von Dorsday, I'm so afraid of you. Won't you please do me the favor of bringing some mutual acquaintance with you? Oh, that's not at all contrary to our agreement, Herr von Dorsday. If I felt like it, I could invite the whole hotel and you'd still be bound to send the thirty thousand gulden. But I'll be content if my Cousin Paul comes. Or would you prefer somebody else? The tall blond man unfortunately isn't here now. And the Filou with the Roman head, unfortunately, has gone, too. But I'll find another, easily. You fear a scandal. That's out of the question. Scandal has nothing to do with it. Nothing matters to one who has gone as far as I have. Today's just the beginning. Or, do you think perhaps that I'll go home from this adventure, a decent girl of good family? No—neither good family nor decent young girl. That matter would be settled, once for all. Hereafter, I'll stand on my own feet. I have beautiful legs, as you and the other participants in the festival will soon

have occasion to observe. So the matter's arranged, Herr von Dorsday. At ten o'clock, while everybody's still in the salon, we'll wander in the moonlight across the meadow, through the woods to your famous clearing. At all events, you'll have to bring the telegram to the bank with you. For it's my privilege to demand a guarantee from a rascal like you. And at midnight, you may return home, and I'll stay with my cousin, or possibly with somebody else, in the moonlit meadow. You've no objection to that, Herr von Dorsday? You can't have. And if I should be found dead tomorrow morning, don't be surprised. In that event, Paul will send the telegram. I'll have seen to that. But don't think, for Heaven's sake, that you, you miserable scoundrel, have driven me to my death. I've known for a long time that I'd end up this way. Just ask my friend, Fred, if I haven't mentioned it to him time and again. Fred. I mean Herr Friedrich Wenkheim. Incidentally, the only decent person I ever

knew in my life. The only one I could have loved—if he hadn't been such a decent person. Yes, I'm a very corrupt creature. I wasn't meant for domesticity and I haven't any talents. As it is, it might be best for our family if it died out. Some catastrophe will overtake Rudi. Some Dutch chorus girl will get him into debt and then he'll defraud Vanderhulst. It runs in the family. My father's youngest brother shot himself when he was fifteen years old. No one knows why. I didn't know him. Ask them to show you his photograph, Herr von Dorsday. We have it in an album. . . . I'm supposed to look like him. Nobody knows why he killed himself. And nobody will know why I did. In any case, not on account of you, Herr von Dorsday. I'll not do you that honor. At nineteen or twenty-one—it's all the same. Or shall I become a nurse girl or a telephone operator or marry Herr Wilomitzer or let you keep me? It's all equally disgusting, and I'll not go to the meadow

with you at all. No; all of that's too tiring and too stupid and too disagreeable. When I'm dead, will you be so good as to send a few thousand gulden to Father, because it certainly would be sad if he were to be arrested on the very day that my body was taken to Vienna. But I'll leave a letter, with this testament: Herr von Dorsday has the right to see my body, my beautiful, naked corpse. So you can't complain, Herr von Dorsday, that I made false promises. You're getting something for your money. Our contract doesn't specify that I must be alive when you see me. Oh, no. There's nothing to that effect. So—a view of my corpse I bequeath to the art dealer, Dorsday, and to Herr Fred Wenkheim I bequeath my diary up to my seventeenth year—that's as far as I wrote it—and to Cissy's Fräulein I bequeath the five twenty-franc pieces which I brought from Switzerland years ago. They're in the desk, next to the letters. And to Bertha I

bequeath my black evening gown. And to Agatha my books. And to my Cousin Paul I bequeath a kiss on my pale lips. And to Cissy—I bequeath my tennis racket—because I'm generous. And I'm to be buried here in San Martino di Castrozza, in the pretty little cemetery. I don't want to go home. Even when I'm dead I don't want to return. And Father and Mother mustn't grieve. I'm better off than they are. And I forgive them. I'm not to be pitied. — Haha, what a funny will! Really, I'm touched to think that by this time tomorrow, while the rest are at dinner, I'll be dead. — Aunt Emma, of course, won't go down to dinner, and neither will Paul. They'll have their meals served in their rooms. I'm curious to know how Cissy will act. Only, I won't know, unfortunately. I'll know nothing more. Or perhaps you know everything so long as you're not buried. And, after all, I'm only making believe I'm dead. And if Herr von Dorsday ap-

proaches my corpse, I'll wake up and open my eyes and he'll be so frightened that he'll drop his monocle.

But, unfortunately, none of it's true. I'll be neither make-believe nor really dead. I won't kill myself at all. I'm too much of a coward. I may be a brave mountain-climber, but even so, I'm a coward. And perhaps I haven't even enough veronal. How many powders are needed? Six, I believe. But ten are more certain. I think I still have ten. Yes, that'll be enough.

I wonder how many times I've actually walked around the hotel. And what next? I'm standing in front of the door. Nobody's in the salon. Of course—they're all at dinner. The salon is seldom entirely deserted. There's a hat on the settee. A tourist's hat. Very smart. Pretty chamois tuft. There's an old gentleman in the fauteuil. Probably hasn't any appetite. Reading the paper. He's well off. He hasn't any worries. While

he is reading his paper quietly, I must rack my brains to get thirty thousand gulden for Father. But no. I know how. After all, it's so terribly simple. What am I after? What am I doing here in the salon? Soon they'll all be coming in from dinner. What shall I do? Herr von Dorsday's certainly on pins and needles. Where is she, he's thinking. Has she killed herself, or is she hiring somebody to kill me, or is she stirring up her Cousin Paul against me? Have no fear, Herr von Dorsday, I'm not so dangerous. I'm a little hussy, nothing more. You'll be rewarded for your anxiety. Twelve o'clock, Room Sixty-five. It'll be too cool for me in the meadow and from your room, Herr von Dorsday, I'll go straight to my Cousin Paul. You certainly don't object to that, Herr von Dorsday?

"Else! Else!"

How? What? That's Paul's voice. Is dinner already over?

"Else!" — "Oh, Paul. Why, what's the matter, Paul?" I'll act innocent. —

"Where've you been hiding yourself, Else?" — "Where do you suppose I've been hiding? I've been taking a walk." —*"Right now—during dinner?"* — "Well, why not? After all, it's the best time for it." I'm talking nonsense. — *"Mother's been imagining all sorts of things. I went to your door. I knocked."* — "Never heard you." — *"Please be serious, Else. How can you make us so uneasy? You could at least have informed Mother that you weren't coming down for dinner."* — "You're quite right, Paul. But you've no idea what a headache I had." I said that quite disarmingly. Oh, what a hussy I am! — *"Is it somewhat better now?"* — "I couldn't really say that." *"Before everything else, Mother—"* "Stop, Paul; not yet. Make my apologies to my aunt. I want to go to my room for a few minutes to primp up. Then I'll come right down and have a little something to eat." — *"You're so pale, Else. Shall I send Mother up to you?"* —

"Don't make so much fuss about me, Paul, and don't look at me that way. Haven't you ever seen a woman with a headache? Of course I'll come down. In ten minutes, at the latest. Good-bye, Paul." — *"Good-bye, Else."* — Thank Heaven, he's gone. Stupid boy—but dear. What does the porter want of me? What—a telegram? "Thank you. When did the message arrive?" — *"Fifteen minutes ago, Fräulein."* — Why does he look at me so—pityingly? For Heaven's sake, what can be in this message? I'll wait until I'm upstairs before opening it. Otherwise, I might faint. After all, Father has—if Father's dead, then everything's all right. Then I needn't go with Herr von Dorsday to the meadow. . . . Oh, what a wicked soul I am! Dear God, please let there be nothing bad in the message. Dear God, please let Father live. Have him arrested, for all I care, but not dead. If there's no bad news in it, I'll offer up a sacrifice. I'll

become a nurse. I'll take a position in an office. Don't die, Father. I'll do everything you ask. . . .

Thank Heaven, I'm upstairs. Turn on the light. Turn on the light. It's become cool. The window was open too long. Courage. Courage. Oh, perhaps I'll hear that matters have been settled. Perhaps Uncle Bernard is giving the money, and they're wiring me: "Don't ask Dorsday." I'll know immediately. But if I look up at the ceiling I can't read the message. Trala, trala, courage. It's necessary. "Repeat urgently ask Dorsday. Sum not thirty but fifty. Otherwise everything useless. Address remains Fiala." — But fifty. Otherwise everything useless. Trala, trala. Fifty. Address remains Fiala. Fifty. But surely fifty or thirty makes no difference one way or the other. Not even to Herr von Dorsday. The veronal is under the laundry—for any emergency. Why didn't I ask for fifty thousand in the first place? I thought of it! Otherwise every-

thing useless. So—I must go downstairs at once. I can't stay here, sitting on the bed. A little mistake, Herr von Dorsday. Forgive me. Not thirty, but fifty. Otherwise everything useless. Address remains Fiala. — "Do you take me for a fool, Fräulein Else?" Not at all, Herr Vicomte. Why should I? But for fifty, I'd certainly have to demand considerably more, Fräulein. Otherwise everything useless. Address remains Fiala. As you wish, Herr von Dorsday. Pray command me. But first of all, write the message to your bank. Otherwise, I have no guarantee. —

Yes, that's how I'll do it. I'll go to his room. Only after he's written out the message before my eyes—then I'll disrobe. I'll hold the message in my hand. Oh, how disgusting! And where shall I lay my clothes? No, no! No! I'll undress here and put on my big black coat, which will cover me completely. That'll be the most comfortable way. For both parties. Address remains Fiala. My teeth are chatter-

ing. The window's still open. Closed. In the clearing? I could have died there. Rotter! Fifty thousand. He can't say No. Room Number Sixty-five. But before that, I'll tell Paul to wait in his room for me. Then from Dorsday I'll go direct to Paul and tell him everything. And then Paul shall box his ears. Yes—this very evening. It'll be a rich program. And then comes the veronal. No—why the veronal? Why die? Not a bit of it. Be merry, be merry. Life's only beginning now. You'll have your share of it. You'll be proud of your little daughter. I'll be a wanton such as the world has never seen. Address remains Fiala. You shall have your fifty thousand gulden, Father, but with the next money I earn I'll buy myself nightgowns, with lace, quite transparent, and expensive silk stockings. One lives only once. Light. I'll light the lamp over the mirror. How beautiful my blondish red hair is, and my shoulders: and my eyes aren't bad, either. Oh, how big they are. It would be a pity.

There's still time for veronal. — But I must go down. Way down. Herr von Dorsday is waiting and he doesn't even know that meanwhile it's become fifty thousand. Yes, I've gone up in price, Herr von Dorsday. I must show him the telegram. Otherwise he really won't believe me, and he'll think I'm making a profit out of the transaction. I'll send the telegram to his room and write something to go with it. To my great regret, it has become fifty thousand, Herr von Dorsday, but that's surely all the same to you. And I am convinced that your suggestions for payment were not meant seriously at all. For you are a Vicomte and a gentleman. Tomorrow morning you'll send the fifty thousand—my Father's life depends on it—to Fiala without delay. I count on it. — "Why, of course, my dear young lady. I'll send a hundred thousand immediately to cover any further contingencies. I shan't ask a guarantee and I'll pledge myself furthermore from this day on to look after the welfare

of your whole family, to pay the market debts of your father and to make good all embezzled trust funds." Address remains Fiala. Hahaha! Yes, just like the Vicomte of Eperies. But that's all nonsense. What can I do now? Something must be done. I must do something. I must do everything that Herr von Dorsday asks so that Father may have the money tomorrow —so that he won't be arrested; that he won't kill himself. And I'll do it, too. Yes, I'll do it. Although it's all for nothing. In half a year we'll all be just as far as we are today! In four weeks, in fact! — But then it will make no difference to me. I'll make this one sacrifice—and no more after that. Never, never, never again. Yes, I'll tell Father so as soon as I get to Vienna; then out of the house—anywhere. I'll consult Fred. He's the only one who really cares for me. But I'm not that far yet. I'm not in Vienna. I'm still in Martino di Castrozza. Nothing has happened yet. So now—how? What?

There's the telegram. What'll I do with the telegram? I knew what I was going to do with it. I must send it to him in his room. But what else? I must write him something to go with it. Yes—but what shall I write him? Expect me at twelve. No, no, no. He'll not have that satisfaction. I won't, I won't, won't, won't. Thank God, I have the powders. That's the only way out. Where are they? For Heaven's sake, they haven't been stolen! No. Here they are. Right here in the box. Are all of them still there? Yes, here they are. One, two, three, four, five, six. I only want to look at them—the precious powders. Looking at them commits me to nothing. And I pour them into the glass, but that commits me to nothing. One, two—but I surely won't kill myself. I wouldn't think of it. Three, four, five,—even five won't really kill anybody. It would be terrible if I didn't have the veronal with me. Then I'd have to jump out of the window, and I wouldn't have the courage for that.

But veronal—you go to sleep quietly and never wake up again. No trouble. No pain. You lie in bed. You drink it in one draught. Dream—and all is over. The day before yesterday I took a powder, and a few days ago I even took two. Ssh, don't tell anybody. Today it'll have to be a little more. It's only for emergencies. In case he revolts me too much. But why should he revolt me? If he touches me, I'll spit in his face. Very simple.

But how shall I get the letter to him? I can send the letter to Herr von Dorsday by the chambermaid. It would be best if I went downstairs and talked with him and showed him the telegram. In any event, I must go down. I can't stay up here in my room. I couldn't stand it for three hours—until the moment arrives. I must go down, too, for my aunt's sake. Ha, what's my aunt to me? What are the people to me? Look, my good people, there's the glass with veronal. So—now I take it up in my hand. Now I lift it up to my lips. Yes, at any

moment I can be over there where there are no aunts and no Dorsday and no father who embezzles trust funds. . . .

But I won't kill myself. That isn't at all necessary. And I won't visit Herr von Dorsday in his room. I wouldn't think of it. I'm blessed if for fifty thousand gulden I'll stand naked in front of an old roué just to save a good-for-nothing from jail. No, no—not in any case. How does Herr von Dorsday come into the picture? Must it be Herr von Dorsday? If one sees me, others shall see me. Yes! Wonderful idea! Everybody shall see me. The whole world shall see me—and then comes the veronal. No, not the veronal. What for? Next will come the villa with the marble steps and the handsome youths and freedom and the wide world. Good evening, Fräulein Else, I like you this way. Haha, down there you'll all think that I've gone mad. But I've never been sensible. For the first time in my life I'm really sensible. Everybody, all of them shall see me! — After

that, there's no return. No return home to Father and Mother or uncles and aunts. Then I'll no longer be the Fräulein Else, who can be married off to any old Director Wilomitzer. I'll make fools of them all—especially that rotter Dorsday—and come into the world for a second time. . . . Otherwise everything is useless—address remains Fiala. Haha!

No more time to lose. Don't become cowardly again. Off with the dress. Who'll be the first? Will it be you, Cousin Paul? Your luck, that the Roman head isn't here any more. Oh, how beautiful I am! Bertha has a black silk chemise. Refined. I'll be much more refined. Wonderful life. Off with the stockings. They'd be indecent. Naked, altogether naked. How Cissy will envy me. And others, too. But they don't dare. They'd all like to—so much. Take me as an example, all of you. I, the virgin, I dare. I'll laugh myself to death over Dorsday. Here I am, Herr Dorsday. Quick—to the

post-office. Fifty thousand. Isn't it worth that much?

Beautiful, I'm beautiful! Look at me, Night! Mountains, look at me! Sky, look at me—how beautiful I am. But you are all blind. What are you to me? The people downstairs have eyes. Shall I loose my hair? No. I'd look like a madwoman. But you shan't think me mad. You're only to think me shameless. Canaille. Where's the telegram? For Heaven's sake, where have I left the telegram? There it is lying peacefully beside the veronal. "Repeat urgently—fifty thousand—otherwise everything useless. Address remains Fiala." Yes, that's the telegram. That's a piece of paper, and there are words on it. Despatched in Vienna at four-thirty. No; I'm not dreaming. It's all true, and at home they're all waiting for fifty thousand gulden, and Herr von Dorsday is waiting, too. Let him wait. There's plenty of time. Oh, how pleasant it is to walk up and down the room, naked. Am I really as beautiful

as I look in that mirror? Oh, won't you come closer, pretty Fräulein? I want to kiss your blood-red lips. What a pity that the mirror comes between us. The cold mirror. How well we'd get on together. Isn't that so? We need nobody else. Perhaps there are no other people. There are telegrams and hotels and mountains and railroad stations and woods, but there are no people. We merely dream of them. Only Dr. Fiala exists—and his address. It always remains the same. Oh, I'm not at all mad. I'm only a little excited. That's quite natural when one is about to come into the world for a second time. For the Else that once existed is now dead. Yes, most certainly I'm dead. The veronal isn't necessary. Shouldn't I pour it out? The chambermaid might drink it by mistake. I'll leave a slip of paper there, and write on it: Poison: No—better: Medicine. So that nothing will happen to the chambermaid. I'm so noble!! So. Medicine, underscored twice, and three excla-

mation points. Now nothing can happen. And if I come upstairs and don't feel that I want to commit suicide, and only want to sleep, then I won't drink the whole glass—only a quarter of it, or perhaps even less. Very simple. Everything's prepared. It would be simplest to run down, as I am—across the hallways and the stairs. But no—I might be stopped before I got downstairs. And I must have assurance that Herr von Dorsday will be present. Otherwise, of course, he won't send the money—the reprobate. — But I still have to write to him. That's the most important of all. Oh, the back of the chair is cold, but agreeable. I'll leave my fountain pen to Fred, when I die. But just now I've something more important to do than die. "Most honored Herr Vicomte—" But be sensible, Else. No salutation. Neither most honored nor most despised. "Your condition, Herr von Dorsday, is fulfilled. — At the moment that you read these lines, Herr von Dorsday, your condition is fulfilled, al-

though perhaps not in the manner you had anticipated." — "My, how well the girl writes," Father would say. — "And so I cannot but hope that you will keep your part of the agreement and send the fifty thousand gulden by telegraph to the given address. Else." — No, not Else. No signature at all. So. My pretty yellow writing paper. A Christmas present. Too bad. So—and now the telegram and letter go into the envelope. — "For Herr von Dorsday," Room Number Sixty-five? Why use the number? I'll just drop the letter at his door as I go by. But I needn't. I needn't do anything. If I felt like it, I could lie in bed now, and sleep, and do no more worrying about anything. Not about Herr von Dorsday, and not about Father. A striped convict's uniform really is very stylish, and many people have killed themselves. After all, everyone must die.

But you needn't do anything for the time being, Father. After all, you have a beautiful grown-up daughter, and address re-

mains Fiala. I'll start a collection. I'll pass the plate. Why should Herr von Dorsday be the only one to contribute? That would be unfair. Everyone according to his means. How much will Paul drop on the plate? How much from the man with the pince-nez? But don't imagine that the fun will last. I'll cover myself again, run upstairs to my room, lock myself in, and, if I feel like it, drink the whole glass at one gulp. But I won't feel like it. It would be pure cowardice. They don't deserve such an honor, the rotters. Ashamed before you? Before whom am I to be ashamed? It's not at all necessary. Just let me look into your eyes, beautiful Else. What enormous eyes you have, when one comes near to you. I wish someone would kiss me on the eyes, on my blood-red mouth. My coat hardly covers my ankles. They'll notice that my feet are bare. What of it? They'll see more! But I'm not committed to it. I can go back now, before I've been downstairs. I can turn back on the first floor.

In fact, I needn't go down at all. But I will do it. I look forward to it. Haven't I longed for something like this all my life?

What am I waiting for? After all, I'm ready. The performance may begin. But don't forget the letter. Fred insists my handwriting's aristocratic. Auf Wiedersehen, Else. You're beautiful in that coat. Florentine ladies had themselves painted that way. Their portraits are hung in galleries and it's considered an honor. — Nothing's noticeable when I have the coat about me. Only the feet. My feet. I'll put on my black patent leather shoes. Then they'll think I'm wearing flesh-colored stockings. Done. I'll go through the halls and nobody'll suspect that there's nothing beneath the coat except me. Just me. And besides I can always return upstairs. . . . Who's playing piano so wonderfully down there? Chopin? — Herr von Dorsday must be rather nervous. Perhaps he's afraid of Paul. Patience—just patience—everything will take care of itself. I don't

know anything yet, Herr von Dorsday. I'm in terrible suspense, myself. Put out the light. Oh, is my room in order? Farewell, veronal. Good-bye. Farewell, my dearly beloved looking-glass.—How you shine out in the darkness! Now I'm quite used to being naked under the coat. Rather pleasant. Who knows if there aren't many sitting this way in the hall with no one aware of it? I wonder whether many women don't go to theatre and sit in the loges this way—for fun or for entirely different reasons.

Shall I lock the door? Why? Nothing will be stolen here. And what if there were—I no longer need anything. Finished. . . . Where's Number Sixty-five? There's nobody in the hall. Everybody's still at dinner. Sixty-one. . . . Sixty-two. . . . Such huge mountain-boots in front of the door There are a pair of trousers hanging on the hook. How indecent. Sixty-four. . . . Sixty-five. . . . That's where he lives, the Vicomte. . . .

I'll lean the letter against the door. He can't help seeing it there. Nobody'll steal it. So—there it is. . . . It doesn't matter. . . . I still can do as I please. I've merely made a fool of him. . . . If only I don't meet him on the steps now. Here he comes. . . . No, it isn't he! . . . This one is much handsomer than Herr von Dorsday. Very aristocratic with that small black moustache. When did he arrive? I might stage a little rehearsal—lift the coat a trifle. I'm very much tempted. Just look at me, my dear sir. You have no idea whom you're passing by. Too bad you're so occupied with climbing the stairs just now. Why don't you stay in the hall? You're missing something. Great performance. Why don't you stop me? My fate lies in your hands. If you greet me, I'll go back again. So, please greet me. After all, I'm looking at you so tenderly. . . . He won't greet me. He's gone. He's turning back! I feel it. Call me! Greet me! Save me! Perhaps, my

dear sir, you will be responsible for my death. But you'll never realize it. Address remains Fiala. . . .

Where am I? In the hall so soon? How did I get here? So few people and so many strangers. Or is my eyesight bad? Where's Dorsday? He's not here. Is this a stroke of fate? I'll go back. I'll write a different letter to Dorsday. I expect you in my room at midnight. Bring the message to the bank with you. No. He might regard it as a snare. It might be one, too. I could have Paul hidden with me, and he could force him to give up the despatch at the point of a revolver. Blackmail. A couple of criminals. Where's Dorsday? Dorsday, where are you? Has he perhaps killed himself in remorse over my death? He'll be in the card room. Of course. He'll be sitting at the card table. If he is, I'll signal to him from the doorway with my eyes. He'll get up at once. "Here I am, my dear young lady." His voice will have that strange sound to it. "Shall we

take a little walk, Herr Dorsday?" "As you please, Fräulein Else." We cross the virgin path to the woods. We're alone. I open my coat. The fifty thousand are due. The air's cold. I contract pneumonia and die. . . . Why are those two ladies looking at me? Do they notice something? Why am I here? Am I mad? I'll return to my room. I'll dress quickly. Put on the blue dress, the coat over it—but open, this time—and nobody'll believe that I had nothing on before. . . . I can't go back. I won't go back. Where's Paul? Where's Aunt Emma? Where's Cissy? Where are they all? No one will notice it. . . . It can't be noticed. Who's playing so beautifully? Chopin? No, Schumann.

I flit about in the hall, like a bat. Fifty thousand! Time flies. I must find this confounded Herr von Dorsday. No, I must return to my room. . . . I'll drink some veronal. Only a few drops of it. Then I'll sleep well. . . . After work well done, sleep is welcome. . . . But the work hasn't

been done. . . . If the waiter serves that black coffee to the old gentleman over there, everything will be all right. And if he takes it to the young bridal couple in the corner, everything's lost. What's that? What is he doing? He's bringing the coffee to the old gentleman. Triumph! Everything's all right. Ha, there go Cissy and Paul! They're strolling in front of the hotel. They're chatting quite gaily. He isn't so very wrought up over my headache. Hypocrite! . . . Cissy's figure isn't as good as mine. Of course, she's had a child . . . What are they talking about? If only I could hear them! Why should their conversation interest me? I might go out, bid them good evening and then go on, flit over the meadows, into the woods, step up, climb up, higher, higher, up to the Cimone, lie down, sleep, and freeze. Mysterious suicide of young Viennese society woman. Dressed only in her black evening coat, the beautiful young lady was found dead in an unfrequented part of the Cimone

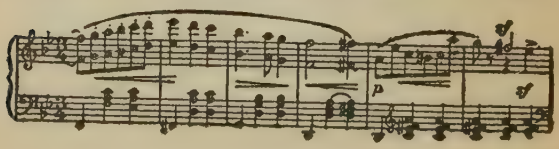
della Pala. . . . But perhaps they won't find me. . . . Or perhaps not until next year. Or even later. Rotted. A skeleton. Better to remain in these warm halls and not freeze. Well, Herr von Dorsday, where are you hiding? Am I obliged to wait? You must find me—not I you. I'll look in the card room. If he isn't there, he has forfeited his privilege and I'll write to him: You were not to be found, Herr von Dorsday. You disappeared of your own volition. This does not release you of your obligation to forward the money at once. The money. What money? What's that to me? I don't care whether he sends it or not. I've no more sympathy for Father, not the least. I've sympathy for no one. Not even for myself. My heart is dead. I believe it has stopped beating. Perhaps I've drunk the veronal already. . . . Why does the Dutch family stare at me so? It's impossible to notice anything. The porter also regards me with suspicion. Has another message arrived? Eighty

thousand? A hundred thousand? Address remains Fiala. If there were a message, he'd tell me. He looks at me most respectfully. He doesn't know that there's nothing under the coat. Nobody knows it. I'll return to my room. Back, back, back! If I tripped on the stairs—that would be pretty! Three years ago, on the Wörthersee, there was a young woman who went in swimming without clothes, but she left on the same afternoon. Mother says it was an opera singer from Berlin. Schumann? Yes—Carnival. He or she plays very well. The card room is at the right side. Last chance, Herr von Dorsday. If he's there, I'll summon him with my eyes and say to him, "I'll be with you at midnight, you rotter." — No, I'll not call him a rotter. But I'll call him that afterwards. . . . Somebody's following me. I won't look back. No, no. —

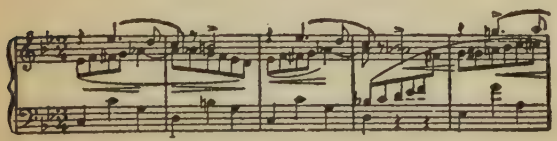
"Else!" — For Heaven's sake, my aunt! I'd better keep right on walking. *"Else!"* — I must turn around. There's no way out.

"Oh, good evening, Aunt." — *"Oh, Else, what's wrong with you? I was just about to go up to you. Paul told me— Oh, how you look!"* "How do I look, Aunt? I'm feeling quite well. I just ate something." She notices something. —*"Else— you have—you have no stockings on!"* — "What did you say? My soul, I have no stockings on! No—!" — *"Aren't you well, Else? Your eyes—you have temperature."* — "Temperature? I think not. I've just had the worst headache of my life." — *"You must go to bed at once, child; you're deathly pale."* — "That's on account of the bad light. Everybody looks pale in this hall." She looks at me so strangely. She can't notice anything? Now, I must keep my poise. All's over with Father if I lose my poise. I must say something. "Do you know, Aunt, what happened to me in Vienna a little while ago? I went out walking with one yellow shoe and one black one." Not a word of it's true. I must keep on talking. What'll I say now?

"Do you know, Aunt, I sometimes have attacks of absent-mindedness. Mother used to have them, too." Not a word of it's true. — *"In any case, I'll send for the doctor."* — "But please Aunt! There isn't one in the hotel. They'll have to call one from the next town. He certainly would laugh if he were called because I had no stockings on. Haha." I oughtn't to laugh so loudly. My aunt's face is distorted with fear. The thing's too weird for her. Her eyes are popping out. —*"Tell me, Else, have you by any chance seen Paul?"* — Ah, she's looking for help. Poise. Poise. Everything depends on it. "I think he's walking in front of the hotel with Cissy Mohr, if I'm not mistaken." — *"In front of the hotel? I'll call them both in. We'll all have a little tea. Yes?"* — "Gladly." What a stupid face she makes! I nod at her quite amiably and innocently. She's gone. Now I'll go to my room. No; what'll I do in my room? It's high time. High time. Fifty thousand. Fifty thou-

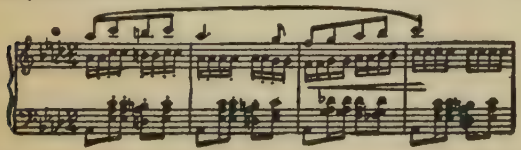
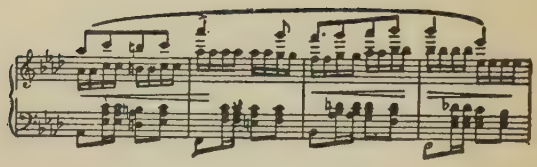
sand. Why am I hurrying so? Slowly. Slowly. . . . What do I want? What's the man's name? Herr von Dorsday. Funny name. . . . Here's the card room. Green curtain over the door. They see nothing. I'll stand on tiptoe. A game of whist. They play every evening. Two gentlemen are playing chess over there. Herr von Dorsday isn't here. Victory! Saved! But how so? I must look further. I'm condemned to look for Herr von Dorsday till the end of my life. Probably he's looking for me too. We always miss one another. Perhaps he's looking for me upstairs. We'll meet on the steps. The Dutch people are staring at me again. The daughter is very pretty. The old gentleman has spectacles, spectacles, spectacles. . . . Fifty thousand. That's not so much, fifty thousand, Herr von Dorsday.

Schumann? Yes, Carnival. I once studied that myself. She plays well. But why she? Perhaps it's a he. Perhaps it's a virtuoso. I'll take one look into the music room.

Yes, there's the door. — Dorsday! I'm falling. Dorsday! He's standing at the window, listening. Is it really possible? I'm burning up—I'm going insane—I'm dead—and he's listening to a strange lady playing piano. Two gentlemen are sitting on the divan. The blond one just arrived today. I saw him get out of the carriage. The lady's no longer young. She's been here for a couple of days. I didn't know that she played piano so beautifully. She's well off. All people



are well off . . . only I am doomed . . . Dorsday! Dorsday! Is that really he?

He doesn't see me. Now he looks like a decent person. He's listening. Fifty thousand. Now or never. Open the door softly. Here I am, Herr von Dorsday! He doesn't see me. I'll signal to him just once with my eyes; then I'll raise the coat a little. That'll be enough. After all, I'm a young girl. A decent young girl from a good family. Not a prostitute. . . . I want to go away. I want to take veronal and sleep. You've made a mistake, Herr von Dorsday. I'm no prostitute. Adieu, adieu! . . . Oh, he's looking up. Here I am, Herr von Dorsday. What eyes he's making. His lips tremble. His eyes are burning into my forehead. He doesn't suspect that there's nothing beneath the coat. Let me go. Let me go. His eyes are shining. His eyes are threatening. What do you want of me? You're a rotter. Nobody sees me—except him. They're listening. So come then, Herr von Dorsday! Don't you notice anything? There in the fauteuil—great God, in the

fauteuil—there's the Filou! Heaven be praised! He's here again. He's here again! He was only on a trip and now he's here again. The Roman head is here again. My bridegroom, my beloved! But he doesn't see me. Nor should he see me. What do you want, Herr von Dorsday? You look at me as though I were your slave. I'm not your slave. Fifty thousand! Does our agreement still hold, Herr von Dorsday? I'm ready. Here I am. I'm quite calm. I'm smiling. You understand my look? His eyes say to me: come! His eyes say: I want to see you naked. Well, you swine, I *am* naked. What more do you want? Send the message . . . immediately. Chills are running up and down my spine. She's playing on. How wonderful it is to be

naked. Chills are running up and down

my spine. She's playing on. She doesn't realize what's happening here. Nobody realizes it. No one sees me yet. Filou! Filou! Here I'm standing naked! Dorsday opens his eyes wide. At last he believes it. The Filou gets up. His eyes are glowing. You understand me, beautiful youth. "Ha, ha." The lady is playing no more. Father is saved. Fifty thousand! Address remains Fiala! "Ha, ha, ha!" Who's laughing there? Am I laughing? "Ha, ha, ha!" What are all those faces around me? "Ha, ha, ha!" How stupid of me to laugh. "Ha, ha, ha!" I don't want to laugh—I don't want to. "Ha, ha!" — *"Else!"* — Who's calling Else? That's Paul. He must be behind me. I feel his

breath on my bare back. My ears are ringing. Perhaps I'm already dead. What do you wish, Herr von Dorsday? Why are you so enormous, and why are you staggering towards me? "Ha, ha, ha!"

Now what have I done? What have I done? What have I done? I'm falling. All is over. Why has the music stopped? An arm is supporting my back. That's Paul. Where's the Filou? I'm lying here. "Ha, ha, ha!" The coat's thrown over me and I'm lying here. The people think me unconscious. No, I'm not unconscious. I'm in all my senses. I'm a hundred times awake, a thousand times awake. Only, I always have to laugh. "Ha, ha, ha!" Now you have your wish, Herr von Dorsday. You must send the money to Father, immediately. "Haaaaah!" I don't want to cry out and I always have to cry out. Why must I cry out? — My eyes are closed. No one can see me. Father is saved. — *"Else!"* —

That's my aunt. — *"Else! Else!"* — *"A doctor, a doctor!"* —*"Run for the porter!"* — *"What's happened?"* — *"It's impossible."* — *"The poor child."* — What are they talking about there? What's all this murmuring? I'm no poor child. I'm happy. The Filou has seen me naked. Oh, I'm so ashamed! What have I done? Never again will I open my eyes. — *"Please close the door."* — Why close the door? What a murmur! A thousand people are crowding around me. They'll think I'm unconscious. I'm not unconscious. I'm only dreaming. — *"Try to calm yourself, my dear lady."* — *"Has a doctor been sent for?"* — *It's a fainting spell."* — How far away they all are. They're all speaking from Cimone. — *"We can't let her lie on the floor."* — *"Here's a shawl."* — *"A blanket."* — *"A blanket, or a shawl—it's all the same."* — *"Quiet, please."* — *"On the divan."* — *"Will you please close that door!"* — *"Don't be so nervous. It's already closed."* — *"Else! Else!"* — If my

aunt would only be quiet! — *"Do you hear me, Else?"* — *"Don't you see, Mother, that she's unconscious?"* — Yes, thank God, to you I'm unconscious and I'll remain unconscious. — *"We must take her up to her room."* — *"What's happened here, for God's sake?"* — Cissy. How does Cissy happen to be in the meadow? Ah, but it isn't the meadow. — *"Else!"* — *"Please be quiet."* — *"Please step back a bit."* — Hands, hands under me. What do they want? How heavy I am. Paul's hands. Go away, go away. The Filou's near me; I can feel it. And Dorsday's gone. They must look for him. He mayn't kill himself before he has sent off the fifty thousand. My good people, he owes me money. Arrest him. — *"Have you any idea from whom the message was, Paul?"* — *"Good evening, my good people."* — *"Else, do you hear me?"* —*"Just let her be, Frau Cissy."* — *"Oh, Paul."* — *"The manager says it may be four hours before the doctor arrives."* — *"She looks as though she were*

sleeping." — I'm lying on the divan. Paul is holding my hand. He is feeling my pulse. Right. After all, he's a physician. — "*She's not at all in danger, Mother. An—attack.*" — "*I won't stay in this hotel a day longer.*" — "*Please, Mother.*" — "*We'll leave promptly tomorrow morning.*" — "*It will be easier to take her over the servants' stairway. The stretcher will be here immediately.*" — Stretcher? Haven't I already been on a stretcher today? Haven't I already been dead? Do I have to die again? — "*Won't you please see to it, Herr Director, that the people at least stand clear of the door?*" — "*Please don't worry so, Mother.*" — "*It's terribly inconsiderate of all these people.*" — Why are they all whispering? It's like a death chamber. The stretcher will be here at once. Open the gate, Sir Matador. — "*The path is clear.*" — "*The people might at least have as much consideration as to—*" — "*Please, Mother, please calm yourself.*" — "*Please, my dear lady.*" — "*Won't you look after*

my mother for a while, Frau Cissy?" — She's his mistress, but she isn't as beautiful as I am. What's that again? What's happening there? They're bringing in the stretcher. I can see it with closed eyes. That's the stretcher for the injured. They laid Dr. Zigmondi on it when he fell off the Cimone. And now I'm to lie on the same stretcher. I fell too. "Ha!" No, I won't cry out again. They're whispering. Who's bending over my head? It smells like cigarettes. His hand is under my head. Hands under my back. Hands under my legs. Go away, all of you. Don't touch me. Shame, shame! What do you want, anyway? Leave me alone. It was only for Father. — "*Please, carefully, so, slowly.*" — "*The shawl?*" — "*Yes, thank you, Frau Cissy.*" — Why is he thanking her? What has she done for him? What will they do to me? Oh, how good, how good! I'm shivering, shivering. I'm shivering all over. They're carrying me, carrying me. They're carrying me to

my grave. — *"Oh, I'm used to that, Doctor. Heavier people have already lain on the stretcher. Once last fall, there were even two."* — *"Sssh, ssh."* — *"Perhaps you'd be so good as to go ahead, Frau Cissy, and see that everything in Else's room is in order."* — What right has Cissy to go in my room? The veronal! The veronal! If only they don't pour it out. If they did that I'd have to jump out of the window. — *"Thank you very much, Herr Director, don't bother further."* — *"I'll take the liberty of inquiring again later on."* — The steps are squeaking. The carriers are wearing heavy mountain-boots. Where are my patent leathers? Back in the music room. They'll be stolen. I wanted to will them to Agatha. Fred gets my fountain pen. They're carrying me, they're carrying me. Funeral procession. Where's Dorsday, the murderer? He's gone away, and so has the Filou. He has gone away too. He has gone back to his wanderings. He came back just for a

glimpse of my white body. And now he's gone away again. He's going on a hazardous path between rocks and precipices. Farewell, farewell. — I'm shivering, shivering. Let them carry me upstairs, always further up, up to the roof, up to the sky. It would be so comfortable there. — *"I've seen it coming all along, Paul."* — What has Aunt seen coming? — *"For the past few days I've seen it coming along. She's really not normal. Of course, she must go to an asylum."* — *"But, Mother, this certainly isn't the time to speak of that."* — Asylum—? Asylum—?! — *"You don't really imagine, Paul, that I'd return to Vienna in the same compartment with this person. We'd go through some pretty experiences."* — *"Nothing whatsoever will happen to you, Mother. I'll guarantee that you won't have the slightest embarrassment."* — *"How can you guarantee that?"* — No, Aunt, you'll have no embarrassment. Nobody will be embarrassed. Not even Herr von Dorsday.

Where are we now? We're standing still. We're on the second floor. I'll just open my eyes for a second. Cissy's standing there in the doorway talking with Paul. — *"Over this way, please. So. Here. Thank you. Move the stretcher very close to the bed."* — They're lifting the stretcher. They're carrying me. It feels good. Now I'm home again. Ah! — *"Thank you. This way. That's right. Please close the door. — If you'd be so good as to help me, Cissy."* — *"Oh, with pleasure, Herr Doctor."* — *"Slowly, please. Here, please, Cissy, take hold of her here. Here at the legs. Carefully, now. And then— Else—? Do you hear me, Else?"* — Why of course I hear you, Paul. I hear everything, but what does that matter to you? It's so wonderful to be unconscious. Oh, go ahead and do as you please. — *"Paul!"* — *"gnädige Frau?"* — *"Do you really think that she's unconscious, Paul dear?"* — Paul dear? She calls him dear! — I've caught you! Dear is what she calls him!

— *"Yes, she's altogether unconscious. That's what generally happens after an attack like this."* — *"Paul, I could laugh myself sick when you act so mature in your medical manner."* — I've caught you, you hypocrites! I've caught you. — *"Keep quiet, Cissy."* — *"Why should I keep quiet if she can't hear anything?"* — What's happened? I'm lying naked in bed under the covers. How did they get me here? — *"Well, how is she? Better?"* — That's Aunt. What does she want now? — *"She's still unconscious?"* — She's creeping around the room on tiptoe. She can go to the devil. I won't be taken to an asylum. I'm not insane. — *"Isn't there any way of waking her up?"* — *"She'll soon come to, Mother. She needs nothing right now except rest. So do you, Mother. Don't you want to sleep? There's absolutely no danger. I'll stay here with Frau Cissy and take care of Else through the night."* — *"Yes, indeed, dear lady, I'll be the chaperon, or Else will be, depending on how*

you look at it." — Horrible woman. Here I'm lying unconscious and she's joking. — "*And I can definitely depend upon it, Paul, that you'll wake me just as soon as the doctor arrives?*" — "*But, Mother, he won't be here until morning.*" — "*She looks as though she is sleeping. Her breathing is regular.*" — "*As a matter of fact, Mother, it is a sort of sleep.*" — "*I still can't control myself, Paul. Such a scandal!—You'll see, it'll appear in all the papers.*" — "*Mother!*" — "*But she can't hear anything if she's unconscious. We're talking very quietly.*" — "*In this condition the senses are sometimes unusually acute.*" — "*You have such a learned son, gnädige Frau.*" — "*Please, Mother, go to bed.*" — "*Tomorrow morning we'll leave, no matter what happens. And in Bozen we'll get a nurse for Else.*" — What? A nurse? You will be disappointed in that, too. — "*Well, we'll talk about all that tomorrow. Good night, Mother.*" — "*I'll have a cup of tea brought up to my room and look in*

here again in a quarter of an hour." — *"That's absolutely unnecessary, Mother.*" — No, it certainly isn't necessary. You just go to the devil. Where's the veronal? I'll have to wait. They're taking my aunt to the door. No one can see me now. It must be on the night table, that glass of veronal. If I drink it, all will be over. I'll drink it immediately. My aunt is away. Paul and Cissy are standing by the door. Ha, she's kissing him. She's kissing him, and I'm lying naked under the covers. Aren't you two ashamed of yourselves? She's kissing him again. Aren't you two ashamed of yourselves? — *"Do you see, Paul? Now I know that she's unconscious. Otherwise she'd jump up at me.*" — *"Won't you please do me a favor, Cissy, and be quiet?*" — *"But why, Paul? Either she is really unconscious, in which case she can hear and see nothing, or else she's making fools of us. If that's so, it serves her altogether right.*" — *"Someone's knocked.*" — *"I thought so, too.*" — *"I'll*

open the door softly and see who it is. — Good evening, Herr von Dorsday." — "*Excuse me, I just wanted to inquire how Else is.*" — Dorsday! Dorsday! Does he really dare? How beastly. Where is he? I hear them whispering in front of the door, Paul and Dorsday. Cissy is standing before the mirror. What are you doing there by the mirror? It's my mirror. Isn't my picture still in it? What are they talking about in front of the door, Paul and Dorsday? I feel Cissy's gaze. She's looking at me through the mirror. What does she want? Why is she coming nearer? Help! Help! I'm calling and no one hears me. What do you want at my bed, Cissy?! Why are you bending over me? Do you want to strangle me? I can't move. — "*Else!*" — What does she want? — "*Else! Do you hear me, Else?*" — I hear, but I can't talk. I'm powerless. I can't talk. — "*Else, you gave us a nice fright downstairs.*" — She talks to me just as though I were awake. What does she

want? — *"Do you know what you have done, Else? Just think. You came down to the music room dressed only in your coat and suddenly you stood there naked before all the people, and then you fell down unconscious. They say it was a hysterical attack. I don't believe a word of it. I also don't believe that you're unconscious. I'll bet you're hearing every word of what I'm saying."* — Yes, I hear, yes, yes, yes. But she doesn't hear me. Why not? I can't move my lips. That's why she can't hear me. I can't move. What's the matter with me? Am I dead? Do I seem dead? Am I dreaming? Where's the veronal? I want to drink my veronal, but I can't stretch out my arm. Go away, Cissy. Why are you bending over me? Go away, go away. She'll never know that I heard her. No one will ever know. I'll never talk to anyone again. I'll never wake up again. She's going to the door. She's turning around once more to look at me. She's opening the door. Dorsday's stand-

ing there. I've just seen him with my eyes closed. No, I really see him. My eyes are open. The door's ajar. Cissy is outside. Now they're all whispering. I'm alone. If I could only move now.

Ha! I can. Yes! I can move my hand. I'm stretching out my finger. I'm stretching out my arm. I'm opening my eyes wide. I see. I see. There's my glass. Quick, before they come into the room again. Are there enough veronal powders in it? I must never awaken again. What I had to do in the world I've done. Father is saved. I could never go out among people again. Paul is peering through the door. He thinks I'm unconscious. He doesn't see that I have my arm almost extended. Now they're all three standing outside of the room again. The murderers! — They're all murderers, Dorsday and Cissy and Paul. Also, Fred is a murderer and Mother is a murderer. They all murdered me and say nothing about it. They'll say, "She committed suicide." All of you

killed me. All of you killed me. All of you. All of you. Well, have I finally reached it? Quick, quick. I must. I mustn't spill a drop. So, quick. It tastes good. More, more. It isn't poison at all. Nothing ever tasted so good. If you only knew how good death tastes! Good night, my glass. Klirr, klirr! What's that? The glass is lying on the floor. It's lying down there. Good night. — *"Else! Else!"* — What do they want? — *"Else!"* — Are you here again? Good morning. Here I am lying unconscious with closed eyes. You'll never see my eyes again. — *"She must have moved, Paul. How else could the glass have dropped?"—"It was an involuntary movement. That would have been quite possible."* — *"Well, if she isn't awake."* — *"What's the matter with you, anyhow, Cissy? Just look at her."* — I've drunk veronal. I'll die. But everything is just as it was before. Perhaps it wasn't enough. Paul's holding my hand. — *"The pulse is quiet. But don't laugh, Cissy.*

The poor girl." — "*I wonder whether you'd call me a poor girl too if I'd stood naked in the center of the music room?*" — "*Won't you please keep still, Cissy?*" — "*Just as you wish, my dear sir. Perhaps I ought to go away so that I can leave you alone with the naked lady. But please don't be embarrassed. Just act as though I weren't here at all.*" — I've drunk veronal. It's good. I'll die. Thank God. — "*Well, now, I'll tell you what I think. I think that this Herr von Dorsday is in love with the naked lady. He was as excited as though it were a personal matter with him.*" — Dorsday, Dorsday! Why, that's the— Fifty thousand! Will he send it off? For God's sake, what will happen if he doesn't? I must tell him. They must bring him back. For God's sake, all this might be for nothing. But I can still be saved. Paul! Cissy! Why don't you hear me? Don't you know that I'm dying? But I don't feel anything. I'm just tired. Paul, I'm just tired. Don't you hear me? I'm

tired, Paul. I can't open my lips. I can't move my tongue, but I'm not dead yet. That's the veronal. Where are you, anyhow? I'll fall asleep presently. Then it will be too late. I don't hear them talking at all. They're talking, and I don't know it. Their voices buzz so. Oh, Paul, please help me! My tongue is so heavy. — *"I think, Cissy, that she'll soon wake up. She looks as though she's trying to open her eyes. Well, Cissy, what are you doing now?"* — *"I'm only putting my arms around you. Why shouldn't I? I know she didn't have any sense of shame either."* — No, I had no sense of shame. I stood there naked before all those people. If I could only speak you would understand. Paul! Paul! I want you to hear me. I drank veronal, Paul. Ten powders, a hundred. I didn't want to do it. I was mad. I don't want to die. Save me, Paul. You're a doctor. Save me! — *"She seems to be quiet again. Her pulse is fairly regular."* — Save me, Paul. I implore you. Don't

let me die. There is still time. But I'll soon fall asleep, and you won't know it. I don't want to die. Please save me. It was only for Father's sake. Dorsday insisted on it. Paul! Paul! — *"Look, Cissy, doesn't it seem to you that she's smiling?"* — *"Well, why shouldn't she smile, Paul, when you constantly hold her hand so tenderly?"* — Cissy, Cissy, what did I ever do to you that you are so cruel? Keep your Paul, but don't let me die. I'm so young. Mother will grieve. I still want to climb many mountains. I still want to dance. And some day I'll marry. I still want to travel. Tomorrow we're going on a trip up the Cimone. Tomorrow will be a lovely day. The Filou will come along. I'll invite him humbly. Run after him, Paul. He's going his hazardous way. He'll meet Father. Address remains Fiala. Don't forget that. It's only fifty thousand and then everything will be all right. Look, they're all marching in convicts' clothes, and singing. Open the gate,

Sir Matador! It's all just a dream. And here comes Fred with his hoarse lady. And the piano's out under the great, broad sky. The piano tuner lives in Bartenstein Street, Mother! Why didn't you write to him, child? You always forget everything. You ought to practice more scales, Else. A girl of thirteen ought to be more industrious. Rudi was at a masked ball and he came home at eight o'clock in the morning. What have you brought along for me, Father? Thirty thousand dolls. I'll need a separate house for them. But perhaps they can go strolling in the garden. Or go with Rudi to the masked ball. God bless you, Else. Oh, Bertha, are you back from Naples again? Yes, from Sicily. I want you to meet my husband, Else. Enchanté, Monsieur. — *"Else, do you hear me, Else? It's I, Paul."* — Haha, Paul. Why are you sitting on the giraffe on the merry-go-round? — *"Else, Else!"* — Don't ride away from me. You can't hear me if you ride so fast through the main street. I want

you to save me. I've taken veronalica. It's running over my legs, right and left, like ants. Go and catch Herr von Dorsday. There he goes. Don't you see him? There he jumps over the pond. He's killed Father, so run after him. I'll run with you. They've strapped the stretcher over my back, but I'll run along. I'm trembling so, but I'll run along. Where are you, Paul? Fred, where are you? Mother, where are you? Cissy? Why do you all let me run alone? I'm afraid being so alone. I'd rather fly. I knew it. I can fly.

"Else!" . . .

"Else!" . . .

Where are you? I hear you, but I don't see you.

"Else!" . . .

"Else!" . . .

"Else!" . . .

What's that? A whole chorus? And an organ too? I'm singing along. What's the song they're all singing? Everybody's

singing along. The woods too, and the mountains, and the stars. Never have I heard anything so beautiful. Never have I seen such a brilliant night. Give me your hand, Father. We'll fly together. The world is so beautiful when you can fly. Don't kiss my hand. I'm your child, Father.

"Else! Else!"

They're calling me from so far away. What do you all want? Don't wake me. Oh, I'm sleeping so well. Tomorrow morning. I'm dreaming and flying. I'm flying . . . flying . . . flying . . . sleeping and dreaming . . . and flying . . . not waking . . . early morning . . .

"El . . ."

I'm flying . . . I'm dreaming . . . I'm sleeping . . . I'm drea . . . drea — I'm fly . . .

THE END

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